



Thursday, May 5, 2016

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MILESTONE FOR £5m CARE HOME

Report by Clare Butler

A NEW state-of-the-art care home in Halesowen has celebrated reaching a landmark stage in its development.

The 66-bed three-storey care complex called Gower Gardens, in Kent Road, will open in September replacing the former 1960s Shenstone Care Home demolished last year. Up to 50 jobs will be created.

The organisation behind the £5 million build, Rowley Regis-based Black Country Housing Group (BCHG), held a 'topping out' ceremony at the site last week which saw BCHG's chief executive, Amanda Tomlinson place the last tile on the roof.

The facility will provide a home for older people in the area with care and support needs. It will be set within landscaped gardens and provide dementia care. It will also have on-site hairdressing facilities and cafe area.

All rooms will be ensuite with modern facilities such as wi-fi for connecting to the internet and flat screen TVs.

Members of the BCHG team, led by Amanda Tomlinson, were present at the ceremony. She said: 'Gower Gardens will become a cornerstone of the community providing much-needed high-quality care for local people in a state-of-the-art building.'

'By providing specialist care and facilities for people with dementia we hope to meet a range of local needs.'

The facility was called Gower Gardens after BCHG worked alongside Lopal Primary School pupils to select a name.

Community

Janette Beckett, director of care and social business at BCHG, said: 'We hope that when the home opens later in 2016 it will be a real part of the community and, with this ambition, it was important for us to involve our community in deciding on the property's name.'

The former Shenstone Care Home was closed by Dudley Council in 2012 as not fit for purpose. All staff were redeployed within the adult social care service.

Dudley Council made the decision to close the home as money was poured into five retirement villages across the borough, providing around 600 flats for older people.

The construction of Gower Gardens has been the first purpose-built care home development for BCHG.

The formal opening of Gower Gardens will take place in September, after a series of public open days in August.

**Gower Gardens**

SNUG FIT AS CAR ENDS UP WEDGED ON PATHWAY

**The car wedged in the walkway at Cradley Heath, thankfully the driver was uninjured and was able to get out of the car despite the tight fit**

TALK about a tight space... The driver of this car is believed to have lost control, with the Citroen C2 ending up wedged in a narrow walkway in Cradley Heath.

Fortunately the woman, aged in her 20s, was unhurt and managed to get out of the car in Forge Lane.

Paramedics alerted a crew from Haden Cross Fire Station at 4.30pm on Monday.

Crew commander Stuart Hawkins said: 'It's obviously a very unusual incident to have taken place, but fortunately the female driver was uninjured and was out of the car by the time we arrived on the scene.'

'We believe she lost control of the vehicle and veered off into the path of the narrow walkway space.'

Haden Cross fire officers Tweeted a picture of the car's unusual position, saying: 'We weren't sure if we should be impressed with the parking or not.'

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TRAGEDY

Legal action move over man's death

THE family of a vulnerable man who choked and died when his carers fed him chicken bites are considering legal action.

Barbara Arch, of Stourbridge, and Wendy Silvester, of Birmingham, who worked for Lifeways Community Care, were taking Andrew Strazdins on holiday when he died choking on food. They received six month jail terms, suspended for 12 months after admitting failure to discharge their duties.

Mr Strazdins's sister, Elaine Scott, of Halesowen, has asked medical negligence specialists Hudgell Solicitors to investigate.

• Carers sentenced – page 5

TRIBUTES

Teacher dies after collapsing at college

COLLEAGUES have paid tribute to a college teacher who died after collapsing at work.

Jane Reason, 57, subject leader for business studies at King Edward VI College Stourbridge, collapsed in a staff area on April 28. She was later pronounced dead at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Birmingham.

Principal Remley Mann said: 'Jane was a popular, respected, and hard-working teacher. Our thoughts are with Jane's family and her friends.'

HEALTH

Op cancellations causing concern

MORE than 2,500 operations were cancelled at Sandwell and City Hospitals over the past 12 months, it has been revealed.

A total of 419 operations were cancelled on the day they were due to take place at Sandwell and City Hospitals, while 316 people had the same procedure put off more than once.

Board members at the Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust, which runs both sites, said the results amounted to 'very poor patient experience'.

Talks are to be held to discuss why so many operations were cancelled and what can be done to bring the numbers down.

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MEETING THE VOLUNTEERS

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Honour for Sir Lenny at televised awards



Sir Lenny Henry - Bafta award

SIR Lenny Henry will be presented with a British Academy of Film and Television Arts (Bafta) special award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to television.

The Dudley-born comedian, actor and writer is best known for Comic Relief. He will be presented with the Alan Clarke award at the televised Bafta TV Awards at the Royal Festival Hall in London on Sunday.

Sir Lenny said: "This is fantastic. I am truly humbled and truly hopeful that this award is a pan-industry ac-

knowledgement that diversity must be at the heart of our industry if we are to reflect British society now and, most importantly, in the future."

Previous recipients of the Alan Clarke award, in honour of the late film director, include TV executive Jane Tranter and screenwriter Paul Greengrass.

Krishnendu Majumdar, chair of Bafta's television committee, said: "There is no-one more deserving of the Special Award this year than Lenny Henry. He has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a performer and writer, appear-

ing in dozens of shows from Tiswas to the hugely popular Lenny Henry Show and most recently in the drama The Syndicate, proving his appeal spans all generations and genres.

"Lenny's recent groundbreaking Bafta lecture has helped to reframe and reignite the discussion about diversity in British television, with the conversations he has sparked already leading to positive changes."

The Black Country comic was knighted for services to drama and charity at Windsor Castle in December.

Bollywood star to Mika his major Mela debut

THE first act has been announced for this year's Sandwell and Birmingham Mela, which is expected to attract more than 80,000 people.

Bollywood singer Mika Singh will be entertaining audiences at the event, returning to Smethwick's Victoria Park on July 16 and 17 for the sixth year. The two-day festival has become the biggest of its kind in the UK.

After live shows across India and in Dubai, USA, Canada and Africa, Singh is set to perform in the UK with his band for the first time at an outdoor event. He will be among more than 100 artists at the event with more acts to be announced in the coming months.

Danny Singh, event director said: "This year we have put in the extra effort and are bringing something really special."

The Sandwell and Birmingham Mela, presented by Star Plus, has more than doubled in size since its inaugural event in 2011 and is supported by Arts Council England.

The event is open between 12pm and 7pm on both days with an entry fee of £1 per day. Event parking is available in Victoria Park at £5 per car. Tickets are available online at www.birminghammela.com and on the gate.

Meanwhile, Indian music scene superstar Asha Bhosle is to come to the Genting Arena on September 17 as part of the 82-year-old Bollywood veteran's farewell tour. Tickets go on sale at 9am tomorrow (Friday) via www.theticketfactory.com or by calling 0844 3388 222.

Classic cars for park's spring fair

DARTMOUTH Park's spring fair is all revved up to include a celebration of classic cars on Saturday.

The festival's displays from local history groups will include five classic Jensen cars, which were manufactured in West Bromwich.

Carol Hartill, secretary of the Friends of Dartmouth Park, said: "We are going to do something a bit different this time. We will have all the usual stuff but also having a history event as well. There will be five Jensen cars on display there and a lot of people have been very interested in that."

Some cars are coming from as far as Surrey in a display arranged by Paul McElhinney, a retired police officer who is a member of the Jensen Owners Club.

The event will run from 11am to 2pm.

Whole lotta tribute to Aussie rockers

A TRIBUTE to Aussie rock band AC/DC is coming to Wolverhampton, complete with cannons. Live/Wire promise more than two hours of high voltage rock 'n' roll at The Slade Rooms on Friday, May 13, blasting out such classics as Highway to Hell and Whole Lotta Rosie.

140 jobs on way as bus operator expands

AROUND 140 jobs are to be created as part of a Black Country bus operator's expansion plans.

The Diamond Bus Company has been given the all-clear to take over former offices in Tipton Road, Tividale, a short distance from its existing base.

The firm, which runs services across the West Midlands, will create a new bus park at the site, with some of the disused office buildings to be demolished.

Diamond is due to start work on the move soon after the plans were given the nod by planning chiefs.

Company bosses said the move was necessary due to the growth of the company and have taken advantage of the opportunity to use the disused site just a short distance away off John's Lane. Diamond has just launched two new services in the Birmingham, a signal of its growth.

A car park at the new site will be expanded to become the new bus park. Part of a four-storey former office block known as The Stones Building will be knocked down along with several other buildings that were associated with the site.

Expansion

The company said it expected work to begin in the 'near future' and confirmed 140 jobs are expected to be created 'in the next six to 12 months'.

Most of the extra workers are expected to be drivers as the company sees to expand the number of services it runs.

Business expert Ninder Johal, who is a board member at the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, welcomed the company's expansion. He said: "The Black Country continues to grow and prosper and is second highest area in the country for investment."

"The Black Country is bucking a trend in terms of skills and employment, and this latest investment is testament to that. I anticipate infrastructure and jobs will continue to rise and businesses will continue to grow."

Diamond buses are routinely seen on the streets of the Black Country, with services running in West Bromwich, Walsall, Stourbridge and Halesowen. A service also runs to the Merry Hill shopping centre from Birmingham.

Porter pedal power for charity ride



Four times World Pursuit Champion Hugh Porter supports the Round the Wrekin Sportive at the Ironbridge landmark

HE has won the World Championship four times and took a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games - now Black Country cycling hero Hugh Porter is to lead cyclists on the mass participation ride into Shropshire.

The Round the Wrekin Sportive takes place on May 22, and hundreds will take part, choosing one of three routes. All head out from Kingswinford Rugby Club.

The cyclists will either cycle 100 miles, 60 miles or 23 miles, finish-

ing back at the club. The event is to raise money for Compton Hospice, said Mr Porter, who is honorary patron of Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club.

He said: "The cycle is a great idea and hopefully the first of many. The sport is growing with thousands of riders out and about every weekend. It is good for your fitness and this event provides people the chance to raise money for charity at the same time."

Organised by Rideventures and

Facehouse Cycles, with Wolverhampton-based Compton Hospice, the sportive is a major fundraiser for the hospice.

Veteran Mr Porter will take part in the 23 mile route, through Wall Heath, Bobbington, Claverley and Pattingham.

Longer distance routes take in Ironbridge Gorge, The Wrekin and The Long Mynd in the Shropshire Hills.

See website www.roundthewrekin.co.uk for more information.

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Academy is praised for improving by Ofsted

AN ACADEMY ordered to improve by Ofsted three years ago has driven up standards to be rated as 'good'.

Staff at Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath have been praised by inspectors after 'rapid' progress at the school, which has 1,274 students on the roll, since the last inspection.

Back in November 2013 the school was rated as 'requires improvement'.

As well as grading the academy as 'good' overall, Ofsted has also rated it 'good' in every category it was inspected – including sixth form, personal development, pupil outcomes, quality of teaching and effectiveness of leadership and management.

Steps taken to make improvements include organising effective training for teachers that has helped them to develop and improve, regular checks on pupils' progress in lessons and providing disadvantaged students with more support.

GCSE results have improved in each of the last three years and A level students recorded 63 A* grades, with 63 per cent of students achieving five A* to C grades last year.

The report, following the inspection which took place on March 22 and 23, says: "The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection and pupils are now making good progress across a range of subjects."

Principal Andrew Burns said: "This wonderful achievement reflects all the hard work and dedication of so many people. This has been a real team effort."

1921 cup ticket sells for £1,300

A MATCH ticket from Wolves' FA Cup final appearance in 1921 has sold at auction for £1,300.

When first bought nearly a century ago the ticket cost five shillings, a mere 25p in today's money.

It was expected the rare item would be snapped up for between £700 and £1,000 but the estimate was far exceeded in London last week.

The 1921 FA Cup final was one of three held at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge when the competition had resumed following the First World War, and ahead of the move to Wembley.

It was Wolves' fifth appearance in a final and their third defeat, with Tottenham lifting the coveted trophy after Jimmy Dimmock scored the only goal of the game in the 53rd minute.

Show celebrating works of the Bard

THE 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death will be belatedly marked in Dudley tomorrow (Friday). The Night Watch present William Shakespeare: From Bard to Verse at Netherton Arts Centre at 7.30pm. £9.



Matthew Harding

Teenagers in dock over fatal collision

TWO youths have been charged in connection with the death of a telecoms engineer hit by a car as he worked at the roadside.

The pair, who cannot be identified due to their age, are alleged to have been in a stolen car when they careered into two Virgin Media technicians working on a communications box in a Coseley street.

Matthew Harding, a 27-year-old newlywed, from Oldbury died after he and colleague Jermaine Buchanan were hit by a Citroen Picasso on July 20. They had been working at the junction of Jack Holden Avenue and Robert Wynd.

Mr Harding, who had married just a

week before, died the following day in hospital. Mr Buchanan suffered a broken arm and jaw, and has since made a full recovery.

The accused, both now 17, appeared before district judge Michael Wheeler at Wolverhampton Magistrates Court on Thursday. The case was sent to the crown court.

It is alleged that the first youth, dressed in a shirt and tie for the court hearing, and who came from Tipton, was at the wheel of a stolen car when it veered off the road and collided with the two technicians. He faces two charges of causing death by dangerous driving and causing serious injury by dan-

gerous driving. The second youth, dressed in denim, and from Bilston, is accused of aggravated vehicle taking, in that he was a passenger in a car that was being driven dangerously when it fatally struck Mr Harding.

The pair, both aged 16 at the time, were arrested at the scene.

Mr Harding's widow, Danielle, who was at his hospital bedside when he died, said that their children were 'well and truly heartbroken'.

The two youths were both given unconditional bail to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Thursday, May 12.

Bouncer jailed for killing guest at a charity dinner

A BOUNCER who killed a guest at a charity dinner dance with a 'massive' punch has been jailed for six years and eight months.

The blow delivered by trained boxer Nicolas Salhan struck father-of-three Inderjit Singh Dhariwal in the neck, fracturing his larynx. Wolverhampton Crown Court was told that it floored the 49-year-old grandfather, banging his head on the ground and fracturing his skull.

Salhan, aged 37, then raised his fist in the air in a sign of victory, said Miss Riel Karmy-Jones QC. She added: "Such was the injury to the brain of Mr Dhariwal that he died the following day."

Salhan from Haybridge Avenue, Stourbridge, admitted manslaughter while fellow doorman Jonathan Davies of Old Bridge Walk, Rowley Regis, pleaded guilty to affray.

Jailing Salhan, Judge James Burbidge QC told him: "Your boxing expertise meant that your fists are as significant as many a weapon could have been." Davies was locked up for 28 months. The judge told him: "Your anger was the spark for this trouble."

Eating

Violence flared when frustrated doormen lost patience with guests who were still eating and drinking an hour after the supposed end of the fundraising event at Samsons Banqueting Suite in Rood End Road, Oldbury, on November 22.

Davies began to push and shout at guests and lost his temper when Mr Dhariwal intervened in an effort to calm the situation, it was said. The bouncer had attended an outpatient appointment with a psychologist for help with anger management just days earlier, the court was told.

Mr Dhariwal, from Langley, was pushed into a stack of chairs by Davies, 43, who then punched the victim four times. Salhan grabbed Mr Dhariwal around the neck from behind as Davies continued to punch him. By this stage Davies had 'lost all control'. Several people were kicked and punched in the fracas which resulted, during which Salhan delivered the fatal blow.

Neither Salhan or Davies offered any assistance to the dying man and left the premises as police and paramedics arrived.

Mr Adrian Keeling QC, defending Davies, who was also a trained boxer, said: "He probably should not have ended up as a doorman and when things became heated he was ill-equipped in every way to deal with it." Mr Tahir Khan QC, representing Salhan, said: "The punch was an isolated lapse – a moment of misplaced judgement."



Killed by a single punch – victim 49-year-old grandfather Inderjit Singh Dhariwal, of Langley



Killer Nicolas Salhan – jailed for six years eight months



Jonathan Davies, of Rowley Regis, 28 months prison

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mayor planning night of delight

THE Mayor of Dudley will be joined by big names in Black Country entertainment at a fundraising evening in aid of his five chosen charities.

Councillor Steve Waltho is hosting a grand finale to his civic year at The Venue on Saturday which will include laughs from the Fizzogs and music from The Empty Can. Mayores Jayne Waltho has organised a 'Mayor Does Strictly' dance contest.

Tickets cost £25, including buffet, from www.ticketsource.co.uk/mayorofdudleyscharities or call 0333 666 3366.

Expert school visit helps in Gambia

EIGHTY-EIGHT school pupils from Stourbridge helped support teacher training in West Africa.

Children from Ridgewood High were joined by teachers from primary schools and volunteers during the school's 10th trip to Gambia. Ex-students also travelled on the trip with 11 teachers from primary schools and a special school to work alongside Gambian teachers providing training.

Ridgewood has been designated a Global Learning Expert Centre and uses Project Gambia to lead and develop learning across Dudley borough.

Talk on history of the silver screen

HISTORIAN Ned Williams will be delving into the history of British cinemas tonight (Thursday) in a talk at the Archives and Local History Centre in Dudley.

Friends of Dudley Archives secretary Janet Lea said: "This talk isn't about the films but about the buildings and examines cinemas from the earliest picture houses and theatre conversions." The Archaeology of the Cinema is at 7 for 7.30pm. Free to Friends and £2 for visitors.

Fake designer clothes are being 'de-branded'

THOUSANDS of pounds worth of fake designer clothing has been handed over to a charity.

In the past items seized by trading standards officers were destroyed or sent to landfill but a partnership with charity His Church now allows the items to be recycled to help less fortunate people. Items worth £5,000, seized by Sandwell Council's trading standards team, have been given to the charity where they are de-branded and have the charity's logo added.

Stairway to Zep heaven

FANS of Led Zeppelin can enjoy a gig by the long-running tribute band Fred Zepplin in Stourbridge next month. Fred Zep will take to the stage to perform at The River Rooms in Stourbridge on June 17. The group has been together since 1993. For tickets call (01384) 397177.

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LATEST go-faster accessory for the jogger who has everything, according to the documentary *Inside a Billionaire's Wardrobe* (BBC2), is a pair of customised Nike trainers made of python skin at a cool £20,000. You may find them a little constricting.

"NO taxation without representation" was the slogan of the American Revolution 250 years ago. It was coined by colonists who were furious at paying taxes to Britain when they had no representatives in Parliament. This week the Institute for Fiscal Studies revealed that, thanks to the UK tax threshold steadily rising from £6,475 to £10,600, almost half of all Britons now pay no income tax. So how long will it be before a majority of the electorate will be able to vote for the most extravagant programmes, knowing that it won't cost them a penny in income tax? Taxation without representation is bad but is representation without taxation any better?



MIND you, it has to be admitted there's precious little evidence that we, the tax-paying public, can keep our politicians in check. Their latest wheeze, to spend £29 million of our money restoring the mechanism of Big Ben, is both wicked and stupid. Wicked because it consumes a vast amount of public money that could be far better used. Stupid because, in an age of atomic clocks and digital sound systems, who in his right mind would rebuild a Victorian clock mechanism? It is as daft as replacing the Romans' central heating with a Roman hypocaust. An intelligent Parliament would have updated Big Ben with a modern digital system for a fraction of the price. But we don't have an intelligent Parliament. We have a collection of financial incontinent obsessives with a fondness for flashing other people's cash around.

MY eye was caught this week by the photo of a 15-year-old Girl Guide confessing her sins to the Pope in an open-air ceremony in Rome. I cannot imagine what a 15-year-old Girl Guide has to confess ("Forgive me, Holy Father, for I have failed to polish my woggle").

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Teen hid loaded gun in mother's garage

A TEENAGER who hid a loaded gun in his mother's garage has been told he'll end up 'in hospital or a cemetery' if he continues his life of crime.

Shaun Scott, 19, was sent to prison for five years after a .155 revolver loaded with four rounds was found at the house in Westminster Close, Dudley. At Wolverhampton Crown Court Scott also pleaded guilty to possession of cannabis and to harassment.

By Simon Stone

the defendant's connection with firearms."

"Police went round to his mother's address that day, and in the garage they found some boxes. Within one of the boxes was a black plastic bag with a weapon. It was a revolver with a .155 barrel capable of holding six rounds. It was loaded with four bullets. Six small bags of cannabis were also found."

Bullets

He says that he paid the defendant back at the start of December, but was told he had accrued interest, and the defendant again wanted a 'straightener'. A couple of days later, the defendant threatened him again. He reported that he said that he was 'looking for a poking', which Mr Bishop took as stabbing.

"On January 27 he spoke to Bishop again and told him he wanted to '**** him up'. Mr Bishop phoned police because he also knew about

the defendant's connection with firearms."

"Police went round to his mother's address that day, and in the garage they found some boxes. Within one of the boxes was a black plastic bag with a weapon. It was a revolver with a .155 barrel capable of holding six rounds. It was loaded with four bullets. Six small bags of cannabis were also found."

William Dudley, defending, said: "He is an immature man. He has a terrible record. I think macho bravado is a big part of these offences. I don't expect he would have used the gun but having it is equally as serious. If he carries on living life the way he is, he will end up in a hospital or a cemetery."

Judge John Wait said:

"The minimum sentence for this kind of crime is five years. It is offered as a deterrent to other people to stop them trying to acquire these deadly weapons."

Nice to see you at comedy club



Game for a laugh – Janice Connolly as Barbara Nice

DESCRIBED as a comedy whirlwind clad in leopardskin, the newly-crowned best comedian in the Midlands is heading to a Stourbridge venue.

Barbara Nice will be headlining the Fitz of Laughter Comedy Club tomorrow night (Friday), in a marquee at Katie Fitzgerald's pub.

Barbara is the comedy creation of Janice Connolly, who played Holy Mary in Peter Kay's Phoenix Nights.

She recently won a public vote to be named Best Midland Comedian and will be part of a triple bill also featuring Ben Briggs and Hayley Ellis.

The night will be hosted by resident comedian Dudley's Wayne Beese, who said: "We are really looking forward to playing host to Barbara. She is excellent at creating a real feel-good atmosphere – she sings, dances, chats and has even been known to crowd surf!"

The comedy club at the venue in Enville Street, Wollaston, runs on the first Friday of every month. Doors open at 8pm. Tickets cost £10 and booking is advised. They are available, with no booking fee, from www.skiddle.com/e/12556752.

Tributes to former councillor, aged 74

A FORMER Dudley councillor has died a few weeks after suffering a stroke.

Tributes have flooded in for Colin Wilson, who stood down in 2014 after ten years as a councillor for Pedmore and Stourbridge East. Mr Wilson died in the early hours on April 26, aged 74. He was a retired civil engineer.

The Conservative councillor played a key role in Stourbridge MP Margot James's election campaign in 2010.

He served Dudley Council as chairman of the development control committee and vice chair of the Stourbridge Area Committee. He is survived by wife of 45 years, Helen, son Andrew and grandsons Thomas and James.

Dudley South MP Tory Mike Wood, who until recently held the Pedmore ward seat vacated by Mr Wilson, said: "As well as being an outstanding councillor and colleague, Colin was a good friend. I've known him for more than 30 years, since I was at primary school with his son, and it is hard to believe that he will no longer be around for advice, guidance or just a good chat."

Mr Wilson lived in Pedmore and was involved with Sebright's Educational Foundation, St Thomas's Community Network and Mary Stevens Hospice, a feoffee and governor of Old Swinford Hospital school.



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Carers are sentenced after man chokes to death in car

TWO carers have been given suspended jail sentences after their negligence led to the death of a vulnerable patient who choked on chicken bites.

Barbara Arch and Wendy Silvester were taking cerebral palsy patient Andrew Strazdins on a seaside break when he died after choking on food in the back seat of the car.

Mr Strazdins, aged 53, who received 24-hour care at his Stourbridge bungalow, suffered from a condition called dysphagia which made it hard for him to swallow and he tended to cram food into his mouth.

His care plan stated he should only be fed while sat in a chair at a table and that he should be given only mashed food and be supervised as he ate.

He died after the carers gave him a bowl of roughly chopped chicken bites as he sat on his own in the back of the car as it passed through North Devon on the way to Cornwall.

Mr Strazdins was cared for by an Oldbury company called Lifeways, paid by the local authority.

Exeter Crown Court heard how he was on his way to a specially adapted caravans in Bude in May 2014 when he died at Broadwoodwidger on the A30.

Strict

The carers both knew of the strict rules about how he should be fed but Arch leaned back from the passenger seat while Silvester was driving. They stopped when they saw him choking. Paramedics found the two women distraught by the side of the road after they failed to revive Mr Strazdins.

A risk assessment had warned specifically of the risk of choking.

Arch, aged 58, of Smallshire Way, Stourbridge, and Silvester, 50, of Newland Court, Birmingham, admitted failing to discharge their duties as carers and were given six-month prison sentences, suspended for two years, by Judge Erik Salomensen.

The charge was reduced from manslaughter to a breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act at an earlier hearing.



Andrew Strazdins died after choking on roughly chopped up chicken bites while going on holiday

The judge told them: "The risk assessment underlined the possibility Mr Strazdins could choke and die. As his carers you willingly took responsibility for him and were trusted to take him away on holiday for his benefit."

"It is clear the chicken bites which he was fed were not mashed but were hard food. They

were cut up but not mashed and he was left to feed himself. He choked and, despite your best efforts, he died. You were both distraught and I accept that the impact remains with you both."

Neither have worked since the tragedy and both will lose their careers as carers.



Carer Wendy Silvester, 50, of Birmingham



Carer Barbara Arch, 58, of Stourbridge

NEWS IN BRIEF

Metro link to New Street is on track

THE Midland Metro is set to run to New Street station in Birmingham city centre from May 22.

Trams will begin operating a full passenger service on the extension between Snow Hill station and New Street station via Bull Street and Corporation Street.

The development comes following electrical safety checks and test runs in the early hours of Sunday morning by Centro, the delivery arm of the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority. The results are now being reviewed by Centro and Network Rail.

Red Cone '20s day for royal birthday

A SPECIAL event to mark The Queen's recent 90th birthday is being held at the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley later this month.

A 1920s-themed crafts and glass making day is being held at the High Street attraction on Saturday, May 14, from 11am to 4pm. The Queen was born in 1926.

There will also be guided tours of the 90ft-tall landmark, which was part of the famous Stuart Crystal business until the 1930s.

The cone is staging an exhibition by the Easel Club from May 7 to June 19.

Meeting on rail future

TRAIN passengers will get the chance to quiz rail bosses over the future of the rail service next week.

The Stourbridge Line User Group hosts a meeting on Tuesday at 7.30pm at the Severn Valley Railway station in Kidderminster. The group's chairman Rob Hebron said it would include senior rail transport representatives.

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Wrong that graduate gets Pound of flesh

FOLLOWING a long, drawn-out legal battle, supported by The Guardian, the European Court of Human Rights has ruled that Cait Reilly, a geology graduate from Birmingham, will be entitled to compensation from the British Government after she was asked to do a fortnight's work experience at Poundland.

Yippee! Work experience at Poundland? How could they?

Miss Reilly, you see, wanted to work in a museum. Very nice, I'm sure. Except that where museums are still being kept open, they are increasingly staffed by unpaid volunteers. The chances of getting paid employment in that line of work are roughly the same as mine are of being picked for the Euros.

Now maybe if Miss Reilly spent a lifetime paying into the social security system, it might be different. But she hadn't. She had not long left university, and clearly taken much more out than she had paid in. And if she does receive compensation, it will be people like you, me, and the Poundland workforce who will be picking up the tab.

Poundland was founded by Steve Smith, a working-class lad from Bilstion who once said it was drummed into him as a child "if you don't work, you don't eat".

I bet he wouldn't have sued the Government.

□□□

READER David Edwards takes me to task over my misgivings about plans to introduce a London-style ban on pavement parking across England to 'de-clutter' our streets.

He says I am "selfish and arrogant", and give no thought to the blind and partially sighted who struggle to navigate the pavements. Now he might be right about the former points, but not about the visually impaired.

Under existing laws, anybody blocking a pavement or making life difficult for the disabled is guilty of causing an obstruction and liable to be fined. Quite right too.

However, there are many places where it is perfectly safe, legal and perfectly reasonable to park partially on the footpath. For example, where the pavement is abnormally wide, and there is plenty of space to get by. Or at the end of a cul-de-sac, or a narrow road where it is necessary to allow emergency access. The proposed new law would allow no such discretion, simply because somebody has deemed that cars parked on the pavement represent "clutter".

Mr Edwards suggests drivers should try walking, which is fine for those who are fit and healthy. But he might also spare a thought for the elderly, or those in poor health for whom the car is a lifeline. Motorists are not some subversive, niche group which needs to be regulated. They are the vast majority of the population and should be treated as such.

Volunteer Avtar Singh Bansal at Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley

Volunteer Joan Kendray with eye clinic officer Sue Thomas

Mike Leadbeater prepares an accident and emergency bay

Hospital volunteers provide vital service

Volunteers give up their free time to help hospital patients, **HEATHER LARGE** meets them and hears more are needed

FROM being a friendly face providing directions to comforting a patient or relative who has received some bad news – hospital volunteers help in many ways.

At Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley, this small army of helping hands can easily be identified by their red shirts and are found throughout the hospital supporting staff, patients and visitors every day of the week.

They carry out a variety of tasks including providing welcoming hot drinks, ferrying patient files around departments, keeping medical supplies well-stocked and ensuring people can find their way to appointments.

But most importantly they offer a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on when people need it the most.

Entertaining

"It's all about helping people, whether it's entertaining a small child while their sibling has their arm plastered or sitting with a relative or patient as they try to come to terms with some bad news," said Mike Leadbeater, aged 70, who has been volunteering in the busy A&E department for 18 months.

Three days a week, Mr Leadbeater, who lives in Kingswinford, can be found supporting staff to ensure the department is working as smoothly as possible.

His jobs can include giving patients their breakfast, cleaning cubicles and re-stocking shelves.

He can also be called upon to sit with patients or take them to other departments in wheelchairs.

"I like to have a laugh and joke with them if I can to help them feel more relaxed and take their mind off what is happening even if it's just for a few minutes," he said.



Trolley refreshments – volunteers Samantha Paskin and Aqsa Khanum at Russells Hall Hospital

His time at the hospital also sees him helping medical students by being a 'live dummy' for test ECG examinations.

"I also came in one day and was told I was having my leg plastered. Sometimes I don't know what I'm coming into but that makes it better in a way," he added.

Retired secretary Joan Kendray, who has been volunteering for two and a half years, spends one day a week working alongside eye clinic liaison officer Sue Thomas, who is registered blind.

Her tasks can include reading medical information aloud to enable Mrs Thomas to type it up and also photocopying documents.

Mrs Kendray, aged 66, from Sedgley, said: "After I finished work, I wanted to do some volunteering and the hospital seemed the best way to help the community."

She continued: "Sue and I get on very well and I enjoy being able to help her with her work."

Mrs Thomas said: "Joan is as good as gold and a delight to work with. She's my eyes and a huge help. We make a very good team."

Grandfather Avtar Singh Bansal, who lives

in Dudley, has been volunteering with his wife Mohinder for the past four years.

He can usually be found in the outpatients department helping people find their way and supporting staff.

"I enjoy it very much," he said. "All of the staff are fantastic."

"It's a great place to work and it feels good to be giving something back," he said.

Fifty-five per cent of the hospital's 400-plus volunteers are retired people while 40 per cent are under the age of 20.

Student Samantha Paskin, aged 27, from Stourbridge, is studying human biology at the University of Worcester. Her jobs include making hot drinks for patients and staff.

"I decided to volunteer to get some work experience at a hospital," she said.

"I really enjoy being able to help and talking to patients is my favourite part of the job."

Aqsa Khanum, aged 19, from Brierley Hill, is another medical student who has been helping out for about a month to gain some valuable hospital experience.

Difference

"I'm really enjoying it," she said. "I think it's a good way to learn about the different departments and different roles, while hopefully making a difference."

Volunteers' coordinator Jane Fleetwood, who set up the volunteer programme 12 years ago, said: "I always say it's not about the job they're doing but the person they are doing it for."

"I am very proud of all of our volunteers for the work they do and the difference they make and we are always on the lookout for more volunteers."

An open day will be taking place on June 6 from 10am until noon as part of Volunteers Week.

Visitors will be able to speak to volunteer mentors and staff to find out more about the roles.

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact co-ordinator Jane on (01384) 456111 extension 1887 or email volunteering@dgh.nhs.uk

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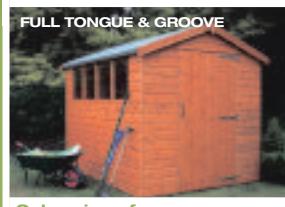
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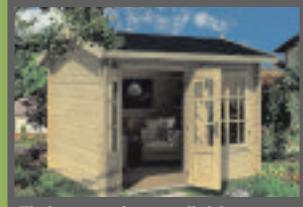


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Mr President, Britain will not be shoved around

WHY does President Obama want Britain to stay in the EU?

I've never been a fan of Obama. He looks like a president, struts like a president and can work an audience. However, at times, I feel that as he is the leader of the free world and that leadership involves effective actions, he has failed miserably.

I would remind Obama that though Britain no longer rules the world, she punches in the heavyweight division and will not be shoved around.

Might I ask the President whether

his great country would accept being part of a North-South American superstate where, for example, Peru has as much power in decision making as the USA? I think the answer might be No! Why, therefore, are we to accept the insulting suggestion that Britain might want to give up its sovereignty?

In the 1970s Henry Kissinger is reported to have said: "When I want to speak to Europe, whom should I call?" The story may be apocryphal but it highlights the fact that US foreign policy wants to deal with one central authority in Europe, rather than the

inconvenience of dealing with individual, independent nation states.

America is primarily concerned with its own perceived national interests, not Britain's.

President Obama has called for Turkey to become a member of the EU, which would invite another 77 million potential migrants to come to Britain.

I never will be party to Yank bashing. If I wished to be part of a superstate (I never will) it would be a land with our values is the USA.

A M ETHERIDGE

Dudley

Concerns over our lost trees

DUDLEY and now Sandwell council have aroused the concerns of residents by chopping down roadside trees.

This happened a few years ago in my locality when a row of mature trees was felled on the Earl Street side of Cot Lane playing field, Kingswinford.

The reason for this was that a complaint had been made about a falling branch and this justified the felling of the trees.

No-one wants the danger of diseased trees but too often healthy trees are included because it is cheaper for a contractor to do the job in one go.

Then, the lost trees are replaced with saplings which in turn are quickly falling victims to the local destructive squad.

It all adds up to an ever diminishing stock of those trees that enhance and benefit our streets and open spaces.

A DRING
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Our cash is given away on foreign aid

IN the week that worried parents found out if their child had a place at the local primary school, official Treasury figures showed that in 2016-17 spending by the Department for International Development will rise to £11.9bn whilst the budget for local councils will fall to £9.6bn.

So, in other words, our Government is giving more of our money away than it is allowing councils to receive to maintain our essential services.

I suspect one of the reasons for all this generosity is so that our political leaders and Royal Family can attend meetings abroad and seem to be superior to other country's representatives.

Many of us must feel anger that our children and old people are not getting the priority they deserve and we can do nothing about it as even if this Government was not in power things would be no different under Labour.

Please someone tell me why we have to be in this position?

As members of the EU surely any foreign aid deemed necessary could be controlled centrally.

R G WILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

Don't trust views of 'experts'

BACK in the 1960s when taking business studies, I asked the course tutor why computers were not part of the curriculum.

He replied with supreme confidence that computers would not play a major role in any office during my working lifetime. That's an expert for you!

So when the Treasury declare that leaving the EU will shrink the UK economy by six per cent by 2030 it sounds ridiculous - because no one knows how the world economy will perform one year hence let alone 14.

More experts spouting precise figures in a bid to convince us all they possess the magical formula for predicting the future with amazing accuracy.

It makes you wonder how on earth Britain survived at all before the EU cavalry came galloping to our rescue. Perhaps we were simply incredibly lucky . . . for a thousand years.

R MONTROSE
Sedgley



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In 1998, the group used the inside of the bus as a temporary shed before starting on the road to returning it to its former glory



The 156 Bus Group – Howard 'Terry' Carter, Graham Harper, Dave Wootton and Ian Rhydderch with their pride and joy



Dave Wootton, who is one of the drivers of the 156 bus

Wheels on the bus go round again after decades of attention to detail

IT has taken Graham Harper decades, but the driven 75-year-old has spent more than £23,000 rebuilding the bus that took him to school more than 60 years ago.

Graham used to hop on the number 28 bus as a teenager each morning 60 years ago and even travelled on the Daimler CVG 5 on its first day of service.

So when the opportunity to get hold of the disused vehicle from the West Bromwich Bus Corporation came up in 1967, he managed to strike a bargain deal with the council. But Graham only began working on the bus, which has cost him £13,000 in rent to store alone, in 1982 with pals.

Incredibly, even after he finished studying at Cronehills Secondary Technical School in West Bromwich, Graham even used the bus to travel to work for years while as an apprentice at a steel equipment company. In total, Graham reckons he had

MEMORY LANE

Report by Alex Ross

travelled 54,600 miles on the bus while using the 28 route.

The components for the bus set Graham back a princely £10,000 in total, with the likes of new tyres and replacement seat covers costing £1,000 and £2,500 respectively.

Even after years of riding the bus to and from work, Graham then took up working as a bus driver until his retirement and puts his long-lasting love down to his father who also worked in the profession.

Chassis

The 38-seater vehicle has since passed its MOT and thankfully for Graham, and his wallet, he doesn't have to pay road tax.

The labour of love has seen Graham and his mates Terry Carter, 74, Dave Wootton, 70, and Ian Rhydderch, 74, at the 156 Bus Group painstakingly strip out the entire bus

right down to the chassis which transpired was built in 1948. And, having driven buses for so long, it was only fitting that Graham took his renovated ride for a spin once it was roadworthy.

Graham said: "Initially when I got behind the wheel of the Daimler I had reservations, as I had been surprised that the bus had passed its MOT. But it was an absolute pleasure to drive and take it on the road as there were so many memories that it brought back. I used to get on the number 28 bus to get to secondary school in the morning and have ended up getting on that route all of my life. I'd often thought that I wouldn't mind becoming a bus driver like my father and when the opportunity came up to buy the bus, I thought I would become an owner as well."

While the project has been dear to Graham and his friends over the years though, he admitted that the painstaking process sometimes tested his wife, Joyce, 70. Graham said: "My wife has been very patient with me over the years."



Graham Harper, seen when he was aged six

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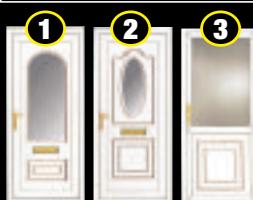
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Here's the bike that beat the Wall of Death



Les Whiston with Guy Martin's Rob North Rocket BSA triple, for which Les supplied most of the parts MILLIONS watched on TV when motorbike racer and personality Guy Martin set a new Wall of Death world speed record.

The daredevil, who has broken numerous speed records on hit TV show Speed with Guy Martin, completed another death-defying stunt by hurtling at 78.15mph around a huge wall built from shipping containers at an aircraft hangar near his Grimsby home.

The craftsmanship of his BSA motorbike was vital and that's where Dudley-based Trident MCS got involved.

It was in an engineering workshop in Woodsetton that 80 per cent of the bike's parts were made and hand-delivered to Martin.

Les Whiston, aged 65, who runs the workshop with his wife Denise, met the 34-year-

old racer while at the Isle of Man for the Manx GP on the notorious TT course. Les had brought over a BSA motorbike over for a racer to tackle the demanding course and Martin, who began his career on his dad's BSA, immediately showed an interest.

Martin built the BSA for his Wall of Death challenge in his own workshop with his dad, Ian, and mechanic, Cammy Whitworth. But 80 per cent of the parts came from the Woodsetton workshop.

"We supplied the swinging arm and engine, the crank shaft was made in Wolverhampton, the pistons were made in Oldbury and we designed the transmission so pretty much the whole record-breaking bike came from the Black Country," said Les.

"Guy would come up and collect the parts himself and we were there when he broke the record."



Daredevil rider Guy Martin

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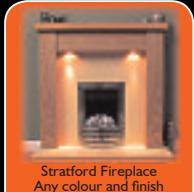


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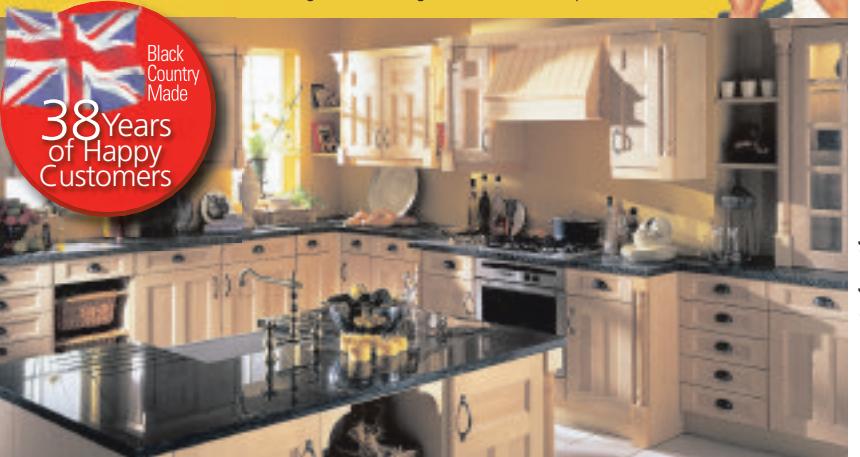
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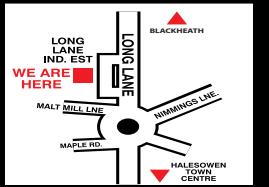
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storm



Caparo boss jumped to his death when upset at job losses

THE boss of Black Country steel firm Caparo Industries jumped to his death from the balcony of his London penthouse apartment.

He had become overcome with depression following the collapse of his business, an inquest heard.

Angad Paul, aged 45, believed he was to blame for the downfall of the family business. His steel company, Caparo, had been enduring large-scale job cuts as administrators tried to salvage the firm. Hundreds of redundancies were announced in October 2015 amid the collapse in steel prices, a month before he died.

Mr Paul was the son of Lord Paul who founded the business in 1968 with a £5,000 loan and turned it into a



Angad Paul, who died aged 45

multi billion-pound enterprise. Angad Paul had run the Oldbury-based Caparo Industries subsidiary since taking over from his father in 1996.

It collapsed with £160 million of debt, leading to the loss of around 500 jobs from its factories in the Black Country including Dudley, Oldbury and Darlaston.

Westminster Coroner's Court heard that Mr Paul became very depressed when the company was put into administration, and, although he believed it was the 'wrong decision', there was nothing he could do.

Devastated

Mr Paul's wife, Michelle, said that in the months before his death her husband had expressed his wish to come off anti-depressant medication, which he had been taking since 1999.

The court heard that Mr Paul sold his four sports cars and began wearing his cheapest watch, saying he did not 'deserve nice things' when many of his workers were going to lose their jobs.

He admitted himself to the Capio Nightingale hospital on October 4, and left 12 days later. He returned to work but was 'devastated' when news broke about major job losses at the company.

On November 8, Mrs Paul left the flat in Portland Place to get a cup of coffee, leaving her husband at home with their two children.

When she and Lord Paul, who lived in the same building, arrived neither of them could find Mr Paul. Mrs Paul later noticed the kitchen door to the balcony was open, and when she looked over the edge she saw him lying on the first-floor flat roof.

Assistant Coroner Shirley Radcliffe ruled that Mr Paul killed himself while 'the balance of his mind was disturbed'.

Celebrations set to carry on camping



Clent Hills Camping and Caravanning Club Site, near Stourbridge, hits an 80 year milestone on May 29

A CARAVAN site is celebrating 80 years of camping and will be marking the occasion with a special on-site birthday party.

Clent Hills Camping and Caravanning Club Site, near Stourbridge, hits the milestone on May 29.

Managers Graham and Tina Bland are planning a number of events for campers to enjoy to make it an unforgettable day at the Fieldhouse Lane site between Clent and Romsley.

Opened in 1936 as the Holding Memorial Site, after Camping and Car-

vanning Club founder Thomas Hiram Holding, it is one of the club's oldest existing sites.

Campers are invited to attend the event dressed in 1930s clothing. There will also be lots of activities to enjoy, including a camp bake-off, children's painting competition, a pavement art event and egg rolling. For campers' four-legged friends, there is even a dog show.

Two marquees will be installed and the activities can be enjoyed free of charge by those camping on site.

Site manager Tina said: "It's our first year here at Clent Hills, and we're delighted to arrive at such an exciting time. The team here will all be in 1930s dress on the big day, and we'd love campers to join in the fun too. It'll be unforgettable."

Clent Hills Club Site has 95 pitches and offers a mix of hardstanding and grass pitches. It is situated one mile from the foot of the Clent Hills.

To book a pitch for the 80th birthday celebrations visit www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/clenthills

One in five sex offences by foreigners

ALMOST 20 per cent of all sex offences in the West Midlands last year were committed by foreign nationals.

The statistics, obtained through a Freedom of Information request, reveal that nearly one in five of offenders carrying out sex attacks were not born in the UK.

In some months last year, the percentage of foreigners committing sexual offences rose as high as 22 per cent.

In total, 1,647 suspects were arrested, 294 of which were foreign nationals. This included 30 Pakistanis, 30 Romanians, 25 Poles and 23 from India.

A total of 584 suspects were later charged, including both non-UK and UK nationals.

The figures indicate a rise in the number of sex offences taking place. The number of non-UK nationals arrested for offences of this type in 2014 was 316, that's 16.8 per cent of 1,878 people who were arrested on sexual offence charges that year.

In addition, 184 foreign nationals were arrested on suspicion of rape in the West Midlands last year. Out of these, a total of 33 were later charged.

Suspects included 28 from Pakistan, 19 from Poland and 14 from India, as well as nine from Jamaica, eight from Romania, seven from Iran and seven from Nigeria.

Black Country bakers invited to join contest

A BAKING competition and cake sale will raise money for a Black Country beauty spot.

Bake For The Woods will be hosted by Warley Woods Community Trust on Saturday, May 14.

There will be four categories for bakers, who have to bring their cakes to the pavilion at the site in Smethwick at 10am ahead of the judging at 10.30am. For more information call 0121 420 1061.

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A. 1930s B. 1940s C. 1950s

Send your answers on a postcard to Cosford Competition, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV11. Closing date: Thursday, May 12. Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final

THE Royal Air Force Cosford Air Show is back and bigger than ever! On Sunday, June 19, the skies above the West Midlands will be alive with the sound of roaring fast jets and the nostalgic hum of World War II aircraft.

RAF Cosford is once again opening its doors for a fun-filled day for everyone and 10 lucky readers may be able



Delight at awe-inspiring Typhoon

to go for free. The organisers have teamed up with the Chronicle series to offer 10 readers the chance to win a pair of tickets.

The Red Arrows will perform their awe-inspiring display and the Typhoon will rattle your bones and leave you wanting more.

From interactive exhibits getting children involved in science and technology to a 1950s feel in the Vintage Village, climbing into cockpits of fast jets, to finding that perfect souvenir in our Traders' market it's not just in the sky that you will be entertained.

This year the show will feature the world class training held at RAF Cosford and the RAF as a whole with displays on the ground and in the air.

A dedicated hangar will showcase the evolution of the jet engine and

the Air Cadets are celebrating their 75th anniversary with a display that will demonstrate the benefits of joining the organisation.

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GP surgery gets praise as most practices are making the grade

HEALTH chiefs have highlighted the great services available across Dudley's GP practices – despite a practice being placed into special measures.

The CQC has inspected 24 Dudley practices this financial year, with 21 receiving an overall rating of good and receiving the highest rating possible for specific areas of service.

Moss Grove Surgery in Kingswinford was given an 'outstanding' rating for being well led in an inspection carried out in February. The surgery provides a full range of GP services to nearly 15,000 patients. Inspectors identified the high standards of safety in place at the practice and said risks were well managed. They noted patients' needs were assessed and care plans developed using best practice guidance.

Under CQC's new programme of inspections, all England's GP practices are given a rating according to whether they are safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

Last month Quarry Road Surgery, on Quarry Road, was rated as 'inadequate' and placed into special measures, following an inspection in February.

Although inspectors found staff were 'courteous and helpful' to patients both visiting the surgery and on the telephone, there were significant areas of concern as 'care and treatment was not always delivered in line with best practice'.

Mr Steve Wellings, chairman of the Primary Care Commissioning Committee, was delighted with the report on Moss Grove. He said: "It is great to see Moss Grove Surgery receive an outstanding rating for being well led by the CQC. It is a testament to the excellent skills and hard work of all the staff who played a part. It is clear that Moss Grove Surgery is providing an effective, responsive and well-led service."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said the extension will be massive boost.

It is hoped the work will begin in the next three years with the creation of the West Midlands Combined Authority key to taking the plans forward.

Councillor Ahmed said: "Dudley has missed out hugely. There is such a great opportunity with all the tourism coming into Birmingham. And the reason is, who is going to catch the number 126 bus into Dudley? It isn't going to happen. But the new connection could take people to the Black Country Museum, Dudley Zoo and the revamped Dudley town centre."

High hops for new touring exhibition



Janine Fletcher from Tipton looking at the touring exhibition about the Black Country's hop pickers

AN EXHIBITION looks at the mass exodus of folk from the Black Country who travelled to Herefordshire and Worcestershire for the hop-picking season.

The Hop Project focuses on the hop-pickers of the 19th and early 20th centuries. This migration of labour from Birmingham and the Black

Country, and also the South Wales valleys, was brought to an end in the 1960s when the mechanisation of the hop industry drastically reduced the number of workers needed for the annual harvest.

The project is conceived and produced by artists Elizabeth Rowe and Chris Poolman. It will be touring over

the next 18 months. The exhibition is being displayed at Oldbury Library from May 5 to May 28 and Haden Hill House Museum, from August 4 to 25, before touring the hop growing counties and next year going to Gdansk in Poland.

For more information visit www.thehopproject.co.uk

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Bluebell wood being opened to the public

AN ANCIENT bluebell wood is being opened for the National Garden Scheme (NGS) near Stourbridge for the next two weekends.

Keeper's Cottage wood in Greensforge Lane boasts more than three acres of bluebells, sweeping along the banks of Smestow Brook where it joins the River Stour.

It's the first time the wood has been opened to the public and is the only bluebell wood listed this year in the Staffordshire, Birmingham and West Midlands NGS region.

Owner Jenny Brookes said: "A bluebell wood nearby was open for the NGS some years ago and hundreds of people used to visit."

"We thought it would be a good idea to open our woods so that more people than just our family and friends can see the magnificent blue carpet which forms during early May."

"It's taken a lot of organisation, so we hope people will turn up to have a look."

Keeper's Cottage is located along Greensforge Lane, just off the A45 Stourbridge to Bridgnorth Road.

The woods will be open from noon to 4 pm on Sunday May 8 and again on Saturday, May 14. For more information contact peter@brookesmeds.co.uk

Last year the NGS donated £2.6 million to help various charities.

Banqueting suite up for sale at Villa Park

A BANQUETING suite in Dudley town centre will go under the hammer in Birmingham today (Thursday). There is a guide price of £475,000 to £500,000 for the Prince Banqueting Suite, Martin Hill Street.

It is one of the 137 lots in SDL Bigwood's latest property auction, from 11am in the Holte Suite at Villa Park ground. It includes properties formerly owned by West Midlands Police and the Canal & River Trust.

Memorabilia that really rocks at auction time

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

By John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



NOT many months go by during which we don't see pop memorabilia in the saleroom in Bridgnorth – and it always attracts the bidders.

Collectors and fans alike are always on the lookout for anything from concert programmes and souvenir mugs to LPs and even items of clothing worn by famous singers and band members.

Items relating to stars who are no longer with us, such as Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, David Bowie and now (sadly) Prince, tend to attract the most attention and we do find collections of records in the same genre, like Northern Soul, draw the buyers.

A few months back, for example, we sold around 140 Northern Soul singles for several hundred pounds.

Beatle memorabilia is always very popular with all age groups and can sell for huge sums.

Albums autographed by one, or all of the Beatles, can sell for several thousands of pounds... and a signed personal copy of The Beatles aka The White Album once belonging to Ringo Starr was sold in the US last year for more than \$700,000.

Original LPs such as Rubber Soul and Yellow Submarine are popular and the Savage Young Beatles album with Tony Sheridan is also sought after.

Original best-selling singles recorded by the legend are back in Day Tripper, Can't Buy Me Love, She Loves You, Hey Jude, Lady Madonna, Love Me Do, Paperback Writer, Norwegian Wood... the list is endless!

Of course, it is possible to buy Beatles records at much more affordable prices, their value always reflects rarity, age and condition.

Vintage LPs and singles recorded by Beatles' contemporary rivals the Rolling Stones are also much sought after – a copy of their 1964 album, aptly called The Rolling Stones, sold a few years ago for more than £1,000, as did Led Zeppelin's Led Zeppelin first pressing with a unique cover.

Collectors of punk music will snap up original copies of the Sex Pistols 1977 God Save the Queen, paying thousands in the process, and Elvis Presley fans can expect to pay anything in the region of £5,000 or more for his 1962 single Good Luck Charm.

Remember that it is only vinyl that sells, vintage cassettes really don't feature on the collectors' wishlist.

Other kinds of memorabilia found in the saleroom include concert tickets, programmes, posters and postcards, you can expect to buy most of these for less than £5, T-shirts, jackets, pens, flyers and even bubblegum.

Although the rare vintage pop items may sell for thousands at auction, fans can easily find memorabilia to suit a limited budget – it's all to do with shopping around but make sure you check condition before you buy.

And if you want to look like a genuine Beatle, come along to the Perry and Phillips sale on Tuesday, we'll be auctioning some boots designed by the man who also made an identical pair for John Lennon!

Perry & Phillips holds valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm at its Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, and auctions of antiques and collectibles are held on the first Tuesday of each month.



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Time to dance like there is nobody watching



Going grey... but not getting old

THIS week I read an interesting article about the 'grey revolution'.

It mentioned the Editor of Vogue in 1965 characterising the 'youthquake', a description of the baby-boomers who were changing popular culture and how they are now creating a 'greyquake' in our society.

This group are widely defined as those born after the second world war up until 1964 but this is a fluid explanation.

They redefined traditional attitude, changed fashion and music, and refuse to grow old.

They created glam rock, punk, new romantic and Brit pop to name but a few, fashion designers such as Vivienne Westwood, Nicole Farhi, Issy Miyake and Paul Smith.

They popularised the home interiors market and bought luxury good with their higher wages, realised 'two career' families and will do more in retirement than our forefathers dreamt of.

The bands and entertainers of 30 years ago are on tour again and the audience

STYLE FOCUS

With Janet Timmis

for longer. These baby boomers, we included, do not like to be seen as old.

The advertising departments are dominated by young people and in recent years have avoided targeting the older market but that is where the money lies and they are now learning not to direct their advertising in an ageist way.

They make us want product because it looks good but as we get older how amazingly good will the self-parking car be?

If you are between 50 and 70, revel in what you have achieved, look back on the amazing things that have occurred and changed in our lifetime and when you are listening to the Sex Pistols (or any of your favourite bands) as the quotation goes 'dance like there is nobody watching and sing like there's nobody listening', your children may not talk to you but it will make you smile!

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THEY might not be a part of the body we think about very often, but our hard-working kidneys need all the help they can get.

Every year, around 57,000 people in the UK are treated for kidney failure, and according to experts, some three million are under threat of chronic kidney conditions.

These crucial organs play a key role in filtering waste from our blood, before turning it into urine, and factors including high blood pressure, smoking and diabetes (the biggest cause of kidney failure) can all accelerate kidney damage.

Although for some people, certain kidney conditions are not preventable, generally speaking, there are a number of things we can do to reduce the risk of developing kidney-related diseases.

"Keeping active, being a healthy weight, eating loads of fruit and veg, having a diet that's low in fat, low in sugar, enjoying your food and having a variety of foods can all help," says NHS renal dietician Harriet Williams, who often works with the charity Kidney Research UK (www.kidneyresearchuk.org).

Here, she shares some of her top tips for keeping kidneys healthy and avoiding problems further down the line...

By Keeley Bolger

REDUCE SALT INTAKE

Cutting back on the amount of salt in your diet will help your kidneys do their jobs properly.

"The maximum recommended intake is 6g a day," says Williams. "One of the reasons to keep your salt intake low is to maintain a good blood pressure, and to try and prevent problems with your kidneys." (Salt is a major factor in high blood pressure.)

Fresh and dried herbs, onions, garlic, lemon juice, vinegar and spices are all good salt substitutes and will enhance flavour in dishes. Try to make food from scratch where possible, so you can track how much salt you eat – a lot of the 'hidden' salts we consume come from processed foods.

DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

Making sure you drink water regularly (but not excessively), especially when exercising or in hot places, will help your kidneys function properly.

"For most people, two to two-and-a-half litres of fluid a day is enough, but that can include tea, coffee and fruit juice," says Williams.

"Water is the ideal, because it doesn't contain any calories. Squashes can be added to help make them more interesting. Limit fruit juice to a small glass."

Bear in mind that your pee should be straw-coloured. If it's darker, it could be a sign that you're dehydrated. Other signs are headaches, fatigue, dry or cracked lips and, if you're very dehydrated, mental confusion.

PACK IN PLENTY OF FRUIT AND VEG

By upping the amount of fruit and veg in your diet, you're giving your body – and in turn your kidneys – the nutrients and minerals it needs to run smoothly.

Fresh is perfect, but if opting for tinned varieties, rinse the veg in water before you cook or eat it, to remove excess salt. The same goes for tinned pulses, too.

CHECK LABELS

Make a habit of reading food labels in the supermarket, so you know exactly what you're eating. "A lot of manufacturers are getting much better now at reducing salt content," says Williams. "Just bear in mind that the recommended salt intake is 6g a day."

MANAGE YOUR WEIGHT

It's recognised that being overweight can increase the risk of Type 2 diabetes, which in turn puts pressure on your kidneys and can lead to kidney disease. Keep your blood sugar stable by eating well-balanced meals, and exercise regularly – walking and gardening all count.

End is in view for road saga

A ROUGH road saga spanning several years has moved a step closer to being resolved, says an MP.

Stourbridge MP Margot James wrote to the organisations and businesses involved in a dispute over the maintenance of Clockfields Drive, Brierley Hill.

Due to a complex legal dispute, the roads on the estate have not been maintained by Dudley Council for several years.

The Conservative MP wrote to each party involved in the dispute urging them to find a long-term resolution.

She now says she received positive responses from Persimmon Homes, who own sewers adjoining the estate, Severn Trent Water and the current landowner.

She added: "I was informed that the current landowner has agreed to fund outstanding items that had prevented Severn Trent from completing their part of the road adoption process. I am pleased of the progress made so far."

TV star Paul added to comedy line-up



Paul Tonkinson – one of the UK's top stand-up comics

FORMER Big Breakfast presenter and stand-up comic Paul Tonkinson has been added to the bill for a new night of comedy in the Black Country this summer.

He was the support act for Michael McIntyre on his recent record-breaking tours, and will appear as top of the bill at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on Saturday, July 16.

The Yorkshireman, considered one of the best stand-ups in the country, has stepped in to replace Kerry Godliman and will join rapper and comedian Doc Brown and Black Country troupe The Fizzogs.

The show – called Live At The Civic – will be hosted by Dudley comedian Wayne Beese, 35, and 400 tickets have already been snapped up by comedy fans.

Wayne said: "Naturally we are really disappointed Kerry has had to withdraw. But we are delighted to be able to announce that Paul Tonkinson will be replacing her. He will probably be best remembered for his stint hosting The Big Breakfast."

To book tickets, call the box office on 0870 320 7000, or online at www.midlandboxoffice.co.uk

Relaxing help call for cancer wellbeing day

AN APPEAL has been made for pamper therapists who are able to volunteer to help cancer patients in the Black Country and Birmingham.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust is holding its annual cancer wellbeing day this month.

Sara Connor, a cancer nurse specialist at the hospital trust, said: "This is a really great event that aims to offer emotional and practical wellbeing to patients living with and beyond a cancer diagnosis. The day gives patients and their carers the opportunity to discover a range of cancer wellbeing services that are locally available, all under one roof. The benefit of relaxation and physical therapeutic interventions is effective in promoting positive wellbeing. That's why the pamper sessions, such as hand and head massages, prove to be so popular."

The event is at Villa Park on May 14, 10am to 3pm. To help call Jenny Donovan or Ian Charles on 0121 507 2618.

Graduate who tried to dodge speeding fine is sent to prison

A UNIVERSITY graduate from Dudley who tried to dodge a speeding fine by paying a 'legal expert' to provide false driver details to police has been jailed for three months.

West Midlands Police said Ayesha Ahmed, who has a degree in international relations and politics, had ruined a promising career for the sake of not paying a small fine.

Ahmed, of Baptist End Road, Netherton, was caught speeding in her BMW twice within five minutes by a mobile camera van parked near her home in July 2014.

But rather than accept a driver awareness course for travelling at 39mph and 40mph in a 30mph zone, the 27-year-old graduate paid £450 to a man who claimed he could exploit a 'legal loophole' enabling her to escape punishment.

Notices of Intended Prosecution sent to Ahmed were returned to enforcement officers, claiming a woman from Walsall had been behind the wheel. Inquiries revealed eight other speeding offences had been attributed to drivers at the same Walsall address.

Ahmed stood trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court and was jailed after a jury unanimously found her guilty

of attempting to pervert the course of justice. She was also banned from driving for 58 weeks.

Pc Steve Jeavons, of the West Midlands Camera Enforcement Unit, said: "Ahmed has paid a heavy price for thinking she could lie her way out of speeding offences. The jury concluded she was deliberately trying to avoid justice and not, as she claimed, victim of a scam by a bogus lawyer. She never met this 'legal expert', didn't have an address or phone number for him, and paid the money via a third party.

"Ahmed was given every opportunity to admit her guilt, that would have spared her a jail term."



Ayesha Ahmed – jailed

Academy plans are challenged

A BLACK Country MP has grilled the Education Secretary over plans to turn all schools into academies. Labour MP for Dudley North Ian Austin asked Nicky Morgan how forcing schools to become academies would improve education when one in five had been told they needed to improve by Ofsted.

Ms Morgan was answering questions from the cross-party Education Committee, which Mr Austin chairs. The Government's plans have been questioned by teaching unions, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, and even some Tory MPs.

Mr Austin said: "The Government should be making the quality of education our number one priority. Labour's original academy programme did help struggling schools improve but there's no evidence that forcing every school down this route will drive up standards."



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MP Tom Watson has risked the ire of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn after he was spotted tucking into a burger in a McDonald's in Dudley.

Labour's deputy leader popped into the Upper Gornal branch of the fast food giant to grab a bite with Dudley North MP Ian Austin. It came a week after it emerged McDonald's had been banned from the Labour party conference over zero-hour contracts and workers' rights.

Mr Watson scoffed a Big Mac, while Mr Austin went for a Quarter Pounder as they took a break after door knocking around the area.

West Bromwich East MP Mr Watson said: "It will come as no surprise to any of my constituents that this was not the first time I have had a Big Mac. I recently got a Fitbit and I'm trying to walk 10,000 steps a day. I was pushing it a bit on Saturday so felt the need for a quick Big Mac."

Mr Austin worked at the old McDonald's on Dudley High Street for 18 months when a student. He has been outspoken in his criticism of Mr Corbyn's decision to turn down £30,000 by refusing the firm at stand at the autumn conference in Liverpool, describing the move as 'gesture politics'.

Mr Austin added "Tom was good enough to talk to residents on their doorsteps and we nipped to McDonald's for a bite to eat."

Tots to tune up for a charity 'singathon'

A FUNDRAISING team of pre-schoolers will be singing non-stop to raise money for baby charity Tommy's.

Music Bugs in Halesowen will see toddlers sponsored to sing songs from around the world in the fundraising Singathon.

The classes at Brickhouse and Oakfield Community Centers will encourage children and their parents to dress up in national costumes for the events on May 9 and 12.

The saviour of Caparo now puts in a bid for Tata Steel

Guess Who is coming to Genting Arena



Roger Daltrey (left) and Pete Townshend, performing with The Who in Amsterdam Pic: Paul Bergen/AFP/Getty Images

ONE of Britain's best known rock bands, The Who, are coming to the Genting Arena at Birmingham NEC this autumn, and tickets go on sale tomorrow (Friday).

The band featuring originals Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend, will take their audience through their entire career from the days of The High Numbers to classic albums such as

My Generation, Who's Next, Tommy, Quadrophenia and Live At Leeds up to the present day at the concert on September 5.

The group started in London in 1964 and, along with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, have become music legends.

The date will be part of The Who's first series of shows in the UK since

headlining the Glastonbury Festival last year.

Tickets for the Genting Arena date are on general sale from 9am tomorrow via website www.theticketfactory.com or by calling 0844 33 88 222 (calls cost 7p per minute plus phone company access charge). Tickets are priced from £68.30 to £79.55 plus fulfilment fee.

THE company that saved nearly 1,000 Black Country jobs after the collapse of Caparo is now targeting a rescue of Tata Steel's UK business and its workforce.

Indian owned Tata is shedding its loss-making UK business, putting 11,000 jobs at risk - 750 at four sites in the Black Country.

But Liberty House, which stepped in to rescue a string of Caparo factories last year, has now put in the first formal bid to buy Tata's UK steel operations.

The group planning a management buyout of Tata Steel's UK assets has also confirmed it has registered a letter of intent expressing its formal interest.

Excalibur Steel UK is the vehicle founded with a view to acquiring Tata Steel Europe, including the huge plant at Port Talbot in south Wales.

Liberty House, the commodities trading firm, headed by Sanjeev Gupta, was first to express an interest after the Indian conglomerate announced the shock decision to dispose of its UK business, including the country's biggest steel plant at Port Talbot in south Wales.

As well as major sites in Wales and the North East, Tata employs nearly 600 people at the Wednesfield Steel park and around 150 more at sites in Walsall, Wednesbury and Brierley Hill.

Intent

Mr Gupta has previously said he believes Tata in the UK can be saved without major job losses.

A spokesman said Liberty was submitting a 'letter of intent' to Tata and has put together an internal transaction team and team of external advisers to take the bid forward.

Roy Rickhuss, general secretary of the steelworkers' union Community, said: "As we have said all along, we welcome interest from credible investors but there is a still a way to go in the sales process."

Laurie's lot caps it all at auction

AN England cap won by West Bromwich Albion legend Laurie Cunningham has sold at auction for £1,600 - with the money to be put towards a statue of the team's famous Three Degrees.

The cap, which was one of six he was awarded playing for England, was from a game against Wales at Wembley in 1979. It sold at Sotheby's Auctions in London to a private buyer after being donated by the player's mother.

The cash will go to funds that have already been raised to provide a statue of the players, nicknamed The Three Degrees after the soul group, of which Cunningham was one third.

Businessman Jim Cadman, who is behind the campaign for the statue in West Bromwich, said: "We appreciate very much Laurie's mother donating the cap. All the money generated by the sale will go towards the statue."

With fellow black players Brendon Batson and Cyrille Regis, Cunningham helped break down barriers at a time when racism was rife.

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Former midwife's smile reborn

'I'd grown tired of living my life around my teeth'

Former Dudley community midwife Vicki Ball, left, is full of smiles after getting new teeth and an implant solution to a long-standing stabilisation problem. 'I love my new teeth,' she says



MEETING Vicki Ball is all about the smiles – lots of them. She's generous with her compliments, can't wait for her next holiday adventure and has the most infectious of laughs.

Her company is light and she's gushing with the praise about her new look.

A retired community midwife who was based at the former Wordsley Hospital, the bubbly 60-something-year-old is quick to affirm: "I love my new teeth and they look natural, don't they?"

Adding: "You can't tell they're not my own," Vicki admits her smile has not always been

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her favourite attribute. "I've always had trouble with my teeth; even as a young girl they crumbled and my gums used to bleed. Even though I was diligent about looking after them, they still let me down," she adds.

Two years ago, Vicki finally lost her remaining teeth. "I really don't know why my teeth were so bad, but I was the youngest of eight children and I understand my mother's priorities did not include teaching me how to brush my teeth. She had more pressing priorities of how she was going to put food on the table," Vicki recalls.

A teenager by the time she had her first tooth brush, she is convinced she couldn't

have done more to save her own teeth. "For the last 18 months I've put up with ill-fitting and badly made dentures. My gums were always sore and the bottom denture was unstable.

Researching options

"My top teeth I could secure with a fixative, but for the bottom it was a waste of time – as soon as I had anything to eat the stability was over," says Vicki.

Her diet became restricted, avoiding beef and crispy fruits like apples.

Frustrated by the appearance and function of her teeth – they seemed to be set too far back, Vicki says – she started researching her options.

"I'd grown tired of living my whole life

around my teeth. I never really stopped going out, but when I did, I was always thinking ahead where I could go to take my teeth out. They were just so uncomfortable." A self-confessed lover of travel overseas – "it's my hobby" – Vicki saw an article in her local newspaper about Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) and his work at the Denture Clinic in North Street, Dudley.



North Street's dental implant surgeon, Dr Owain Rees (left) BDS, DGDP (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC 61576 with principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353

"I'd seen a piece about suction dentures and implant retained dentures and there seemed to be a solution for me," she says.

After seeing Steven and implant surgeon Dr Owain Rees BDS, DGDP (UK) DIP IMP DENT (UCL), Vicki's treatment included two implants to stabilise a lower over denture and the prescribing of high quality traditional upper dentures to help support her facial

features. "From start to finish it took 14 weeks, but it was worth the wait. When I first saw my teeth in the mirror, I thought they looked just like real teeth and . . . they feel like my own teeth."

Such a relief

"My husband, Terry, couldn't believe they were so good. Not to have to keep thinking about my teeth when I'm out is such a relief," she says.

Steven says: "Mrs Ball needed dentures that would offer proper support to her facial features.

"These days the term 'facelift' dentures is banded about. The claim is spurious, but with the correct setting of teeth, the effect is to lift the facial structures in the same way natural healthy gums and teeth support tissues and muscles. I'm very pleased to have been part be of giving a new birth the Vicki's smile."

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Choose the right tradespeople to tidy home for sale

If you are planning to sell your home it might be a good idea to carry out routine maintenance and improvements before going to market.

Not all tasks are simple DIY jobs and you may need a little bit of help.

At one time or another, most of us have had a bad experience with tradespeople, but there are ways to increase your chances of getting it right.

1. It's no secret that one of the best ways to find someone who'll do a good job is to get a recommendation from a friend, family member, neighbour or colleague. However, it doesn't necessarily work well when it's a recommendation from another tradesperson. While your plumber may know a good electrician they've worked with before, for example, if it's a case of trying to get a mate some work, be cautious. It's also the case that some tradespeople do a good job the first few times you use them and then become unreliable, perhaps because they have too much work - they're only as good as their last job.

2. If you don't have a recommendation from a fellow customer, where can you turn? An architect, if you're using one, may have contractors they use regularly and can get quotations from. Depending on how much you want the architect to do (and how much you want to pay them), they may also be able to manage the project and contractors for you, saving time and energy.

3. A trade body, such as the Federation of Master Builders (www.fmb.org.uk), can be a good place to start. Most trade bodies have a section on their website where you can search for members and check membership. There should also be an explanation of what qualifications members have and the code of practice they've signed up to or the undertakings they make, etc, so you know what to expect.

4. For some jobs, it's essential to check the tradesperson you're employing belongs to the professional body they claim to. For example, if you need someone to work on a gas appliance, by law they have to be a member of Gas Safe Register. You can check someone's credentials at www.gassaferegister.co.uk, and search for members near you.

5. Gas Safe Register members can self-certify that their work complies with building regulations, and this is useful with other trades too. It means you don't need to employ a building control or approved inspector (unless it's a job only they can sign off on) to confirm that the work complies with building regs, as the contractor can do it themselves - and issue a certificate to confirm this, which you may need when you sell your home.

While this isn't necessary for all jobs, it is for some, including a lot of electrical work. Many electricians who can self-certify their work belong to NICEIC.

The NICEIC website - www.niceic.com - is particularly useful.

Region sees record rent rises over the past year

Rents have increased by an average of 3% over the past year to £791 per month, according to the latest buy to let index.

Record rents were recorded in the West Midlands while rents fell in Wales and the North East, according to Property Wire.

On a monthly basis March was a relatively subdued month, with the level of average rents the same as was seen in February. Month on month rent growth has dipped marginally from 0.1% between January and February 2016 to a flat 0% between February and March 2016.

Leading the whole of England & Wales, rents in the East Midlands now stand 8.5% higher than in March last year, at an all-time record high of £613 per month. This is followed closely by the West Midlands with 6.7% annual rent rises, taking the average rent in the West Midlands region to a separate all-time record of £597 per month.

London is in third place in terms of annual rent rises, up 4.6% from the same point last year. However at £1,231 the capital's average monthly rent remains below the all-time record of £1,301 set six months ago in September 2015.

At the other end of the spectrum Wales and the North East are host to annual rent falls, both dropping by 2.2% since March last year. This takes rents in Wales to £551 per month and rents in the North East to £507 per month in March 2016.

On a monthly basis the East Midlands matches the South East with a 0.7% month-on-month rise in rents, followed by the East of England where rents have risen by 0.6% between February and March.

Meanwhile, taking into account both



rental income and capital growth, but before property specific costs such as maintenance, the average existing landlord in England and Wales has seen total returns rise to 12.2% over the 12 months to March.

The index points out that this is a clear jump from 10.7% seen a month before, over the 12 months to February, and is also the fastest annual rate of return for existing landlords seen since November 2014, when the same measure last reached 12.3%.

In absolute terms this means that the average landlord in England and Wales has seen a return of £22,135 over the last year before any deductions such as property

maintenance and mortgage payments. Of this, the average capital gain contributed £13,494 while rental income made up £8,641 over the 12 months to March.

While a recent surge in capital values has boosted total returns for existing landlords, the same trend has suppressed rental yields for those aspiring to become landlords, or looking to grow their property portfolio, the report points out.

As rents rise alongside property prices, rental yields are proving relatively resistant to rising purchase prices. However the gross yield on a typical rental property in England and Wales, before taking into account factors such as void periods, is now 4.9% as of March 2016, compared to

5.1% in March 2015. Paying the rent on time has become slightly more of a challenge for tenants in March, the index suggests. Across England and Wales the overall level of rental arrears now stands at 9.1% of all rent due in the private rented sector, compared to 8.8% in February 2016.

Tenant finances have also felt a setback compared to the same point last year. The latest arrears rate of 9.1% compares with 7.4% rent arrears in March 2015.

Despite this, and on a longer term basis, levels of late rent remain more encouraging. March still compares very favourably to the all-time high of 14.6% of all rent payable in arrears set in February 2010.

Top Tip

Are you planning a bit of a tidy-up to sell you home?

If you're painting a surface that becomes hot, such as a radiator or barbecue, ensure it's cold a) before you start painting, b) while you're painting it and c) while the paint's drying.

With spray paints, it's important to apply lots of thin coats rather than a few thick ones, and to spray from a distance of at least 15cm to get a good finish.



Expert Phil ramps up the competition

With his co-presenter Kirstie Allsopp winning the first round, property expert Phil Spencer has ramped up the competition in series two of Channel 4's Love It Or List It.

The TV personality tells Gemma Dunn why it's important to have a giggle on set and how he's adapted to family life in the countryside.

Phil Spencer is a man on a mission.

Having carved out a career based on his passion for property, the 46-year-old is a tour de force when it comes to helping feuding, hapless homeowners alongside his Location, Location, Location co-presenter Kirstie Allsopp.

"I couldn't [do it without her] as it wouldn't be the same," he says of his on-screen 'marriage'. We bring very different things to it, but we like working together; it's more fun together than it is apart."

But the Channel 4 show isn't where the 'Kirstie and Phil' collaboration ends. Others include Relocation, Relocation and Location Revisited; plus an entirely new format in Love it Or List it. And this spring, they're back with the latter.

Reuniting for a second series of the

show that initially attracted 2.3 million viewers per episode, the plucky dream team are helping families who have fallen out of love with their house.

In competition with one another, Allsopp will once again be positioned in camp 'love it', encouraging families to stay put and revamp their current property; while Spencer is still team 'list it' and will try to convince them that 'listing' their house for sale and moving is the only way. "Making any series for the first time is tough because you're trying to crack the format," Spencer reasons.

But its popularity, he believes, is down to it being "very timely".

"The problems that we help people solve are the problems that are discussed in every home up and down the country."

"Relevant now more so than ever because the cost of moving is so high, so you can't afford to get it wrong. It's a big decision and there's never a straight answer."

"It's very rare that people say 'this is definitely what we're going to do'."

Round one saw Allsopp in the lead as she dramatically transformed the homes of four couples.

"I have had to pull out all the stops to try and catch up. It's a bit of fun, but we're quite competitive anyway," admits the Kent-born star.

But he is quick to reassure viewers that the main focus of the show is "to help these people".

"It's not about us winning or losing. We're going to have a bit of fun along the way but it's not guns at dawn."

With housing hitches including couples who are running out of space and bored of the outdated decor, to those who bought the wrong home to start with or ended up having more children than they anticipated, Spencer promises a real cross-section of interesting characters.



Weekly club at The Portal tackles loneliness

A WEEKLY club aimed at combating loneliness has been set up by Dudley Canal Trust.

The club, led by volunteers, runs every Tuesday between 10am and noon at The Gongoozler cafe in new multi-million pound heritage centre, The Portal, which was recently officially opened by the Princess Royal.

The club gives people the chance to have a chat over a cuppa.

Co-ordinator Rebecca Cooper-Sayer said: "It's fantastic that we've been able to set up this informal chit-chat club. It's run by our team of warm and friendly volunteers. There is no formality or agenda, you don't even have to come every week, just drop in."

Chief executive Nick Morris said: "We can offer so much more for our visitors now that we have our new visitor centre.

"As a charity, we're always looking for ways to engage with the local community."

For more information call 0121 557 6265.

Parents being warned as more children are left home alone

Babes in Lemur Wood



Phoebe, Dudley Zoo ring-tailed lemur, with one of her twins born on April 17

THERE'S double delight at Dudley Zoo where keepers have welcomed the arrival of tiny lemur twins.

The ring-tailed babies are the eighth litter for their 14-year-old mother Phoebe. Since their birth on April 17, they have been melting the hearts of zoo staff and visitors at the Lemur Wood attraction.

They are settling in well into their enclosure and have been getting to know their siblings including twins Itzy and Bitzy, who were

born in August. Section leader Pat Stevens said: "Phoebe just gets on with nursing them while also dealing with Itzy, Bitzy, Icarus, Kinich, Nelly, Kelly, Spock and Freya – as well as partner, Frank, who all live in Lemur Wood with her."

"The siblings all seem very excited with the newborns. The babies are doing very well and Phoebe seems very settled in the walk-through wood exhibit and is happy to show off her new additions."

SCORES of families in the Black Country and Staffordshire are being referred to authorities for leaving children home alone, new figures reveal.

A total of 68 referrals to police, children's services or social services were made by the NSPCC in 2015/16 – up from four on the previous year.

The cases were passed on to the authorities after calls were made to the NSPCC helpline.

The charity has warned parents to think carefully before they leave their children alone.

A total of 1,883 referrals were made by the NSPCC across England and Wales last year, an increase from 1,826 the year before. Last year the NSPCC helpline took 2,489 calls from adults concerned that children were left unattended. Some 888 of these – 36 per cent – happened in the school summer holiday.

There is no set age for leaving a child alone but the law states there should be no risk of harm to the child.

Overnight

It is suggested babies and toddlers are never left on their own and under-16s should not be left alone overnight.

The total number of referrals is gradually rising, from 60 in 2013/14, to 64 in 2014/15 and 68 in 2015/16.

In 2015/16, there were 14 in Dudley (up from 10 the previous year); 13 in Walsall (up from five), 12 in Wolverhampton (up from 11), six in Sandwell (down from 11) and 23 in Staffordshire (down from 27). Birmingham was up from 36 in 2014/15 to 37 in 2015/16.

The NSPCC will refer a case to other agencies, such as the police or children's services, if there are serious concerns for a child's welfare.

Karol Keenan, NSPCC service manager in the West Midlands, said: "The law says that you shouldn't leave children home alone if they'll be at risk. We don't believe it's acceptable to leave babies, toddlers or very young children home alone for any length of time."

"Children mature at different rates so it's vital there is some flexibility for parents. Asking yourself questions like 'would they know what to do in an emergency?' are helpful."

Anyone with concerns can contact the 24-hour NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Bowie's farewell musical gift for Peaky Blinders

ROCK star David Bowie granted the creator of TV gangster drama Peaky Blinders permission to use his music just days before his death.

The Ziggy Stardust singer was such a fan of the BBC Two series, filmed at Dudley's Black Country Living Museum, that he sent Birmingham-born writer and director Steven Knight his last album prior to its release.

Bowie released Blackstar days before he died of cancer in January. Knight explained to Radio Times that a senior executive from Bowie's record label had ar-

rived at his house with the album on December 30. He said: "Then on the following Tuesday we heard that he'd passed away."

"His people were keen to establish that we could use it before he died."

The singer had also contacted the show's star, Cillian Murphy.

"He sent a photo of himself with razor blades in his cap to Cillian about a year ago," Knight said, adding: "He was a big, big fan."

The stylish crime thriller has become an international hit and the third series arrives on TV screens tonight (Thursday).

Lake District walk to boost Beacon's work

FUNDRAISERS are needed to take part in a 27-mile charity trek in the Lake District in aid of the Beacon Centre.

The Sedgley-based sight-loss charity is appealing for walkers to take on the challenge, from September 16 to 18, to raise funds.

Day one of the trek covers Keswick to Langdale following the beautiful Cumbrian Way, a distance of around 17 miles. Day two covers Langdale to the stunning waters of Coniston in South Lakeland, a distance of around 10 miles.

The trip includes two nights of accommodation

and all meals are included from Friday night until Sunday lunch.

It has been created to be accessible for both sighted people and those with sight loss, including those with guide dogs.

The charity says describes the trek as "a chance to get off the beaten track and see some of the sights of the Lake District rarely spotted by tourists".

The fundraising target is £500, including £50 registration fee.

See www.beaconvision.org for further details.

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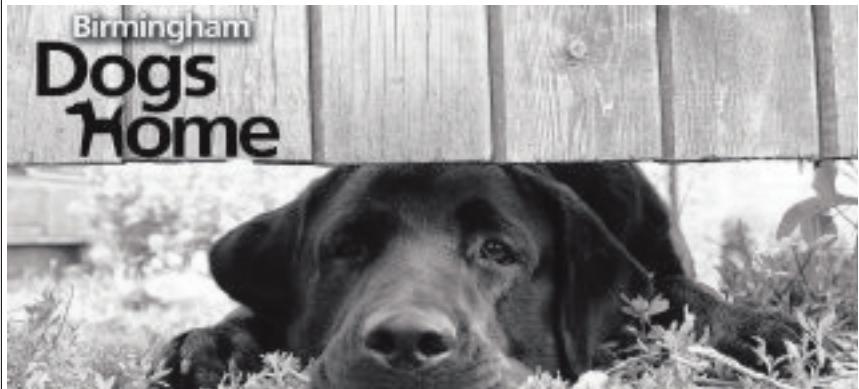
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High-flying Noel is in brilliant form

Noel Gallagher's **High Flying Birds**,
 Genting Arena, Birmingham NEC
 CLASSIC rock, mod rock, Brit pop,
 call it what you want but Noel Gal-
 lagher's honed it to perfection.

The genius that this Mancunian music
 magpie is that he takes the best ingre-
 dients (a pinch of Sex Pistols, a twist
 of Beatles, a drop of Led Zep) are crafts
 them into his own songs.

Noel was hunched over the mic, guitar
 in hand, the performance enhanced

by state-of-the-art video imagery. The
 band's sound was augmented by a
 brass section and choir.

There was a little banter with the
 standing fans at the front and a dedi-
 cation of D'yer Wanna Be A Spaceman to
 Leicester City fan and Kasabian
 singer Serge Pizzorno.

There were the predictable cries of
 Oasis. He pleased fans of his old band
 by pepperering his 100 minute set with
 those 90s favourites. But most songs

came from the two High Flying Birds
 albums, the self-titled debut and last
 year's *Chasing Yesterday*.

They were brilliantly done from
 opener Everybody's On The Run
 through Riverman, The Mexican and
 If I Had A Gun. Oasis favourites in-
 cluded Half The World Away, Cham-
 pagne Supernova, The Masterplan,
 and the encore's ecstatic sing-along
 Wonderwall and Don't Look Back In
 Anger.

Leon Burakowski

Compelling drama from small cast**REVIEWS**

Setting the scene for the, sometimes outrageous, but very entertaining displays

Sexy dresses and stilettos – and that was just the men

Priscilla Queen of the Desert,
 Grand Theatre

THIS was one show that was never going
 to drag. With a storyline about two drag
 queens and a transsexual woman travelling
 across the Aussie outback, a kaleidoscope of
 colourful outfits and language, and a hit
 parade of dance floor favourites including Say
 a Little Prayer, Go West and Hot Stuff it
 was always going to keep you on your toes.

Set in one room and with
 compelling dialogue, the
 small cast serves to make it
 more intimate and gripping.

Talking Scarlet, the
 company behind the production,
 are back at the Grand in
 June for *Swap!*, written and
 directed by Ian Ogilvy and
 starring Freya Copeland
 (ex-Emmerdale) and Kim
 Tiddy (The Bill). If it's only
 half as good as this, it will be
 worth watching.

Mark Shipp

stepping into the shoes previously worn by
 the likes of Jason Donovan and Darren Day.

Teaming up with Adam Bailey as Felicia,
 the fellow drag artist and transsexual Ber-
 nadette, played by Simon Green, the three
 worked together, played together and argued
 together along the tortuous journey.

The production, based on the 1994 Aus-
 tralian film, follows the journey of the trio
 who travel in a battered old bus and have to
 deal with a difficult situations on the way
 including homophobic abuse.

The three singers lowered on platform to
 sing above the stage had terrific voices and
 the cast, including Wolverhampton's Amy
 Di Bartolomeo, as Diva, were very deserving
 of the standing ovation. The show runs
 until Saturday.

Sue Attwater



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Exhibitionism is the first international exhibition charting the story of The Rolling Stones, and will take over two entire floors of the prestigious Saatchi Gallery.

Nine thematic galleries, over 500 original artefacts, and striking cinematic and interactive technologies will lead visitors through the band's fascinating 50-year history.

It will feature original stage designs, rare guitars and instruments, iconic costumes, unseen video clips, audio tracks, personal diaries and album cover artwork.

There will also be collaborations and work by an array of artists, designers, musicians and writers – from Andy Warhol, Shepard Fairey, Alexander McQueen and Ossie Clark to Martin Scorsese.

Free time in London for shopping or sightseeing in the theatre district is also included. Here the shops, market stalls and eateries of Covent Garden are just a short walk away, and the famous stores on Oxford Street and Regent Street are close by too.

DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: JUL 23, AUG 20



Wolves in appeal for unity after sponsorship deal row

WOLVES have hit back at criticism over its sponsorship deal with The Money Shop – and launched a range of charitable initiatives in response to fan feedback.

Bosses at the club have been stung by a furious reaction from some quarters to the three-year deal, which was announced recently.

More than 3,000 fans have signed a petition opposing the deal, launched by Tom Byrne from Sedgley. Two city MPs and a host of councillors have urged

Wolves to reverse its decision, including Dudley Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe.

In response, Wolves have published open letters from chief executive Jez Moxey to MPs Rob Morris and Pat McFadden and city council leader Roger Lawrence.

He pleads for unity and adds that although 'we all wish it were different', football is governed by a constant need for investment, such as the Money Shop deal.

Replica

Wolves have launched an option for parents to buy a child's replica Wolves shirt without the Money Shop logo and a new Wolves/Money Shop project to give financial education to youngsters.

They will publish an advert in next season's programme highlighting work by charities on financial issues, while community finance organisations will be able to advertise at The Money Shop's Wolverhampton store.

Wolves marketing chief Matt Grayson said the club was fully aware of the strength of feeling among fans, organisations and politicians. He added: "We are always keen to acknowledge and understand the views of our supporters, and recognise that this has proved a contentious issue, but we would ask people to judge the partnership between Wolves and The Money Shop over the course of the three-year agreement."

Spectators

Each abseiler can bring a maximum of four spectators to watch and cheer them on, and they will be allowed in Dudley Zoo at a reduced cost of £8.

To find out more about the event email contact@balls to cancer.com or call 07882 110625.

More information about the charity is available at the balls to cancer.co.uk website.

Takeover for²¹
engineers
after tragedy

AN ENGINEERING company left in limbo after its founder was killed in a motorcycle accident in Slovenia last year, has been taken over by a Dudley firm.

Askey Precision Engineering in Wednesfield has been acquired by the Dudley-based Machined Fabrications group.

Askey Precision's founder and managing director, Colin Askey, from Cheslyn Hay, died in September last year.

The 52-year-old father of two, a keen motorcyclist was on a tour of Europe, leading a convoy of 28 other bikes in Slovenia when he lost control of his Ducati, came off the bike and was struck by a car.

Aerospace

His company employs 12 people at Neachells Lane, providing sub-contract machining capacity, jig and fixtures amongst other services to the aerospace, defence and automotive sectors.

New owner Machined Fabrications is part of a group of engineering companies specialising in heavy engineering, machining and fabrication in the West Midlands and Lancashire.

Matthew Wild, group managing director, said: "We are delighted to have this company as part of our group."

It's bound to be an interesting history talk

THE historic custom of marking out boundaries will be discussed at a Cradley Heath church.

The custom of 'beating the bounds' will be discussed by Margaret Bradley at Overend Methodist Mission in Banners Lane.

The talk will include information about the tradition in the Black Country with lots of pictures. It is free admission to the event on Thursday, May 12, at 7.30pm.

Site visit saves former school building



The Claughton Centre dates back to 1904, originally Dudley Upper Standards School it was renamed after a former mayor

PLANS to demolish an historic former school to make way for more than 50 homes have been rejected.

The Claughton Centre in Blower's Green Road, Dudley, formerly the Sir Gilbert Claughton School, was set to be flattened to make a large area of land available for a housing development.

Around 56 homes were proposed to be built on the site by PSP Dudley. Councillors had been keen to see the disused site redeveloped for housing but after visiting the site bosses were

injustice to Dudley and its people. Our next stage would be hopefully to meet with the potential developers and discuss the next steps of the use of the building."

Save Britain's Heritage contacted Dudley Council over the Edwardian building. Deputy director Mike Fox,

Committee chairman Councillor Qadar Zada said: "Seeing the site for myself has completely changed my view of it. It is a much more significant building than I first thought. I was very surprised in how much of a good condition it still stands in.

"I believe if the applicant goes ahead and gives notice to demolish the building, it would be a great and significant

Zoo abseil event for cancer charity

A CANCER charity is organising a sponsored abseil event down the walls of Dudley Castle.

Balls to Cancer, which is based in Coseley, is inviting people to sign up for the event being held on September 25.

It costs £10 to register and everyone taking part has to raise a minimum £200 in sponsorship for the charity.

The charity raises funds for male cancer awareness and education, particularly about testicular cancer.

Spectators

Each abseiler can bring a maximum of four spectators to watch and cheer them on, and they will be allowed in Dudley Zoo at a reduced cost of £8.

To find out more about the event email contact@balls to cancer.com or call 07882 110625.

More information about the charity is available at the balls to cancer.co.uk website.

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DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: July 23

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Visitors to Brighton are set to reach new heights this summer when the world's tallest moving observation tower opens.

Be one of the first to experience the impressive journey on the Brighton i360 and see ocean views complete with dramatic chalk cliffs.

The fully enclosed aerodynamic pod is boarded at pavement level before it gradually rises to a height of 138 metres, giving a whole new perspective of Brighton and Hove.

During the 20 minute ride, a pod attendant will point out the sights and explain some of the history of the area along with the design and engineering of the i360.

Following the journey there will be free time to explore Brighton. At 1,722 feet long the Palace Pier is regarded as the finest pier ever built, the marina is another great place to explore along with the lanes - a fabulous maze of alleyways, which make up the historic heart of Brighton, crammed with stylish shops, seafood restaurants, pubs and cafes.

A visit to the historic spa town of Royal Tunbridge Wells is also on the itinerary. Here the original Chalybeate Spring has flowed with its health giving waters for over 400 years.

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DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: August 12

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DAYS: 4 DEPARTS: Sept 22, Oct 20

From
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Afternoon Tea at the Houses of Parliament

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- ✓ Services of a tour driver
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DAYS: 2/3 DEPARTS: Various dates



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DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: December 17



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Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

DAYS: 8 DEPARTS: Various dates



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See Page 25



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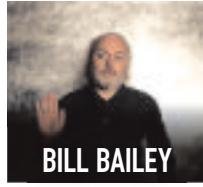
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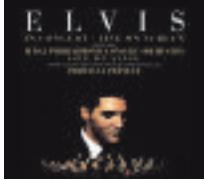
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Violence, sex and opera singing too

PREJUDICES against opera as being boring are likely to be blown away by English Touring Opera's acclaimed new productions of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

Human sacrifice and vampire-like villains feature in ETO's bloody new version of Gluck's opera set in the aftermath of the Trojan War.

Sung in French with English surtitles, the two and a half hour epic will be staged at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre on Monday.

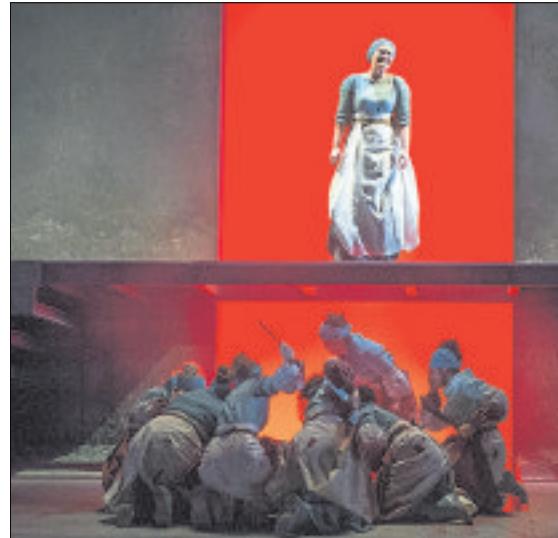
Tragedy

A brother and sister are reunited in the most heart-breaking circumstances in this Greek tragedy, directed for ETO by James Conway, designed by Anna Fleischle and with Martin André conducting. Due to perform at the Grand is Australian mezzo soprano Catherine Carby as Iphigénie and Australian-born baritone Grant Doyle as her brother Oreste.

Don Giovanni will be sung in English translation on Tuesday in a near three hour production. Featuring opera's most famous anti-hero, director Lloyd Wood has set the story of the serial seducer and his long-suffering servant in the sewers of Vienna circa 1900. Australian-born baritone Nicholas Lester is due to play the dirty Don in Wolverhampton with former G4 bass Matthew Stiff as his servant Leporelo.

To book visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01902 429 212.

There will be further highlights for opera fans next month when Welsh



ETO's *Iphigénie en Tauride* (front *Don Giovanni*) Photo: Richard Hubert Smith

National Opera makes a return visit to Birmingham Hippodrome, this time featuring the classics Cavalleria rusticana and Pagliacci.

WNO celebrates its 70th birthday with the double bill of Cav & Pag. Each opera packs in much high drama and powerful music in just over an hour. The double bill, sung in

Italian with English surtitles, will be at the Hippodrome on June 9 and 11.

On June 12 WNO perform In Parenthesis, young British composer Iain Bell's adaptation of the epic poem by David Jones about First World War soldiers who enter a magical wood amid the horror of the Somme.

Citizen Khan comes home

WHEN we called Adil Ray ahead of his UK tour, we were a bit worried. Would we meet the charming Adil, actor and personality? Or would the rather formidable Citizen Khan be on the other end of the line, telling us that he didn't have any free tickets for us, so get lost?

Fortunately, it was the former. The 41-year-old creator of Britain's much-loved self-appointed community leader Mr Khan is preparing for the They All Know Me tour, which comes to Birmingham's Genting Arena tomorrow (Friday).

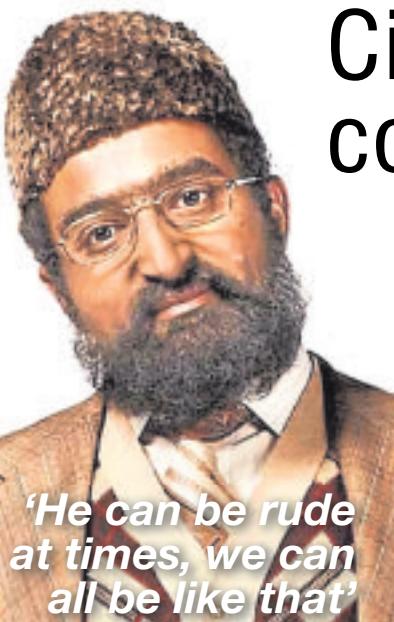
"I come from Birmingham, my show is set in Birmingham and Mr Khan is a Brummie character, so it all feels rather warm and cuddly, if I'm honest," says Adil.

The tour will allow fans of the BBC One sitcom to see the show live on stage – something that has been so well received, six more dates had to be added to the Britain-wide tour.

So, what does Adil think makes Citizen Khan so popular?

"There's an element of all of us in him. He can be a bit proud, a bit deluded and a bit of a dreamer," he says. "He can be rude at times and I think we can all be like that. But I think deep down, a lot of it is a cover that hides vulnerabilities. And that's what makes him real."

"If you grew up after 9/11, the only time you've seen a Muslim on the telly is when they're a terrorist or somebody talking about terrorism. It's a negative portrayal. And now you've got someone like Mr Khan, hopefully kids will realise that Muslims aren't all bad."



'He can be rude at times, we can all be like that'

Alt-rockers Wussy and Chastity Belt

OHIO alt-rock outfit Wussy play the Hare and Hounds in Kings Heath tomorrow (Friday). The same venue hosts London singer-songwriter Isaac Gracie on Monday and on Wednesday, from Walla Walla Washington, feminist rockers Chastity Belt.

Rat Boy's gig at the O2 Institute in Digbeth tonight is sold out, Cuban-American Goth Aurelio Voltaire holds court tomorrow and MC Lethal Bizzle is at the venue on Saturday.

Ian McNabb's band The Icicle Works are at the O2 Academy tomorrow and bands from Stafford College have a showcase at the venue on Wednesday. Tomorrow The Treatment are at Wolverhampton Slade Rooms.

Living for rock and a tribute to da Vinci

THEATRE meets gig when Middle Child Theatre of Hull bring Weekend Rockstars to Birmingham Rep's The Door venue tomorrow (Friday) and Saturday.

Written by Luke Barnes with original music by James Frewer, it tells of three young people who live for the weekend and rock music.

As part of the International Dance Festival Birmingham (see right), the Rep's main house on Tuesday hosts the visually striking Vuelos (Flights), a family-friendly tribute by award-winning international company Aracaladanza to the genius of Leonardo da Vinci.

Festival celebrates a world of dance

INTERNATIONAL Dance Festival Birmingham on Saturday features a free six hour dance spectacular beside the Bullring from noon.

From tonight to Saturday there are sold out performances at Birmingham Hippodrome by Cuban dancer Carlos Acosta, part of his farewell to ballet.

Tonight and Saturday Csaba Molnar performs Eclipse in a double bill with duo Jinx 103 at the Patrick Centre (in the Hippodrome). On Tuesday and Wednesday the Hippodrome hosts the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan.

The festival continues until May 22, see www.idfb.co.uk

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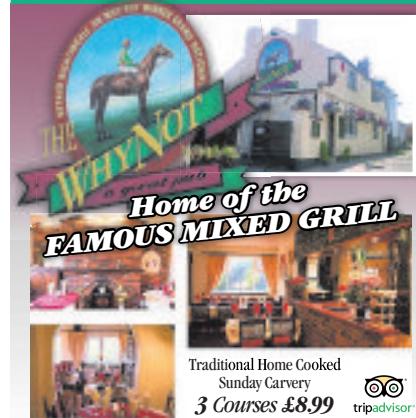
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CHOICE

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry Cooks. **(R) 12.00** BBC News: Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Athletics: Diamond League Doha. **Highlights 2.00** The World Cup Rugby League. Castleford Tigers v Salford Red Devils. (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.25** Can't Touch This.

6.15 **Pointless Celebrities.** Toby Anstis and Jenni Falconer, Janice Long and Bob Harris, Peter White and Steve Punt, and Angie Greaves and Steve Pank take part in the general knowledge quiz.

7.05 **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** The comedian hosts another evening of entertainment at London's Theatre Royal on Drury Lane. This week, he is joined on stage by fellow stand-up Rob Beckett, and introduces an acrobatic dance performance by Romeo of the Cirque du Soleil. He also invites electro-pop trio Years and Years to play for the assembled live audience, and a handyman receives the surprise of his life when he becomes the Unexpected Star of the Show.

Plus, Michael hijacks Strictly Come Dancing judge Bruno Tonioli's mobile phone, composing another embarrassing message to deliver to his contacts in Celebrity Send To All.

8.00 **The National Lottery: Win Your Wish List.** Including the Lotto and Thunderball draws.

8.50 **Casually.** New consultant Elle Gardner's first day in the ED proves to be a baptism of fire.

9.40 **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Agnes goes on a diet after her comments about her weight, but soon realises how difficult it will be to lay off the fish and chips. (R)

10.00 BBC News: Weather.

10.30 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights from the Premier League, including Leicester City v Everton and Norwich City v Manchester United; National Lottery Update.

11.55 **Peter Kay's Comedy Shuffle.** This selection includes Peter talks about dogs on This Morning. (R)

12.25 **Film: Mad City.** (1997) Hostage drama, starring John Travolta. **2.15** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.20** BBC News.

2.40 This is BBC Two.

BBC2

6.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **8.00** MasterChef: The Finals. (R) **9.00** MasterChef: The Finals. (R) **10.00** The Women's Football Show. (R) **10.30** Film: Sausage Party. (R) **11.00** The Hairy Bikers' Everyday Gourmets. (R) **11.30** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.45** Escape to the Continent. (R) **2.45** Come to Nothing. (R) **3.30** The Harry Bikers' Pubs That Built Britain. (R) **4.00** Flug It! (R)

5.00 Bake Off: Crème de la Crème. (R)

6.00 **Gardeners' World.** Horticultural ideas and advice. (R)

6.30 **Attenborough's Passion Project: A Blank on the Map.** The BBC marks David Attenborough's 90th birthday by revisiting four of his "passion projects", beginning with the 1971 programme in which he met elusive tribesmen in New Guinea.

7.30 **Attenborough's Passion Project: The Lost Gods of Easter Island.** A documentary from 2000, in which David Attenborough traces the origins of a mysterious carved figure he bought in New York back to the natives of Easter Island.

8.30 **Dad's Army.** Mervyn Waring finds a German pilot trapped on top of the town clock by his parachute, so the platoon attempts a rescue mission. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe. (R)

9.00 **The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses – Henry VI Part I.** New series. The acclaimed adaptation of Shakespeare's historical plays returns. England's defeat in the Hundred Years War divides the court of Henry VI. Drama, starring Tom Sturridge, Sophie Okonedo and Hugh Bonneville.

10.50 **Film: Zodiac.** (2007) Fact-based crime thriller about the tortuous hunt for a mysterious serial killer who terrorised San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s, and taunted the police and media with cryptic messages. Three men became obsessed with identifying the murderer after his reign of terror inexplicably stopped, but their fixation with the case took a heavy toll on their lives. Starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Robert Downey Jr, Mark Ruffalo and Brian Cox.

1.20 **Film: Kick.** (2009) Two teenage girls learn their favourite footballer is transferring to Real Madrid, so kidnap him to make him stay. Comedy drama, with Kerie Hayes and Nicola Burley. **2.40** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.15** Bottom Knocker Street. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Super Stories. (R) **7.15** Super Stories & Monsters. (R) **7.45** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.15** ITV News: Weather. **12.24** Regional Programme. (R) **1.30** BBC Champ. (R) **2.30** Film: Despicable Me. (2010) Animated comedy, with the voice of Steve Carell. **4.30** The Wipe Show. **5.30** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.45** ITV News: Weather.

6.00 **You've Been Framed! Finest.** Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, including a mustard-swallowing challenge that backfires and a teenager who finds a cockroach in his dinner.

7.00 **Bang on the Money.** Game show in which two teams from Essex and Newcastle aim to hit a specific target number in a series of physical and mental challenges.

8.00 **Britain's Got Talent.** Ant and Dec introduce more coverage from the nationwide talent show's touring audition stage, now in its fifth week. As the judges huddle up to be crowned as the 10th champion in the history of the competition. Reports suggest only one Golden Buzzer remains, meaning one of last week's acts was impressive enough to tempt either Ant and Dec or Simon Cowell to put them through to the semi without further ado. It remains to be seen whether any of this week's crop of performers will be able to wow the judges to the extent that the final Buzzer will be used.

9.15 **Play to the Whistle.** Wilfried Zaha, Funmi Omotayo and Rochelle Humes join Frank Lampard and Bradley Walsh for the sports-based comedy show.

10.00 ITV News: Weather.

10.15 **Film: Body of Lies.** (2008) A CIA agent pursuing a terrorist is caught between allegiance to his superior and the local intelligence chief. Ridley Scott's thriller, with Leonardo DiCaprio, Charlize Theron and Idris Elba.

11.25 **Film: Alien.** (1979) A cargo spacecraft is invaded by a deadly creature that begins preying on the crew. Ridley Scott's sci-fi horror, with Sigourney Weaver.

1.40 **Hollyoaks.** (R) **3.45** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **4.00** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.55** Four Rooms. (R) **5.50** The King of Queens. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 **The King of Queens.** (R) **6.35** Bottom Knocker Street. **6.45** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.55** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Super Stories. (R) **7.15** Super Stories & Monsters. (R) **7.45** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** The Sun. (R) **10.30** Flug It! (R) **11.00** The Sunhumanity Show. **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.20** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.00** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ascot, Lingfield Park and Haydock Park. **4.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. **5.35** Homes by the Med.

6.30 **Channel 4 News.**

7.00 **Great Canal Journeys.** Timothy West and Prunella Scales follow the ancient routes of the Vikings and travel to Stockholm, where they navigate the city's canals.

They later head out into the far-flung islands of the archipelago, before paying a visit to Drottningholm Palace Theatre, where they meet Wallander actor Krister Henriksson. (R)

8.00 **Coastal Walks with My Dog.** More celebrity dog-walkers embark on jaunts along some of Britain's most scenic coastline routes, with their trusty canine companions in tow. This property show presenter Phil Spencer visits the White Cliffs of Dover, while adventurer Ben Fogle walks along a path with a connection of the spiritual past of North Wales. Plus, Angela Griffin takes her new puppy on an adventure near Whitby in North Yorkshire.

9.00 **Film: Prometheus.** (2012) A spacecraft is sent to another world, where it is left in ancient artefacts in search of aliens that may have created the human race. However, the explorers on board discover the extraterrestrials may not be the benevolent creatures they imagined, while the company funding the expedition has its own agenda. Ridley Scott's sci-fi thriller and Alien prequel, starring Noomi Rapace, Michael Fassbender, Charlize Theron and Idris Elba.

11.25 **Film: Alien.** (1979) A cargo spacecraft is invaded by a deadly creature that begins preying on the crew. Ridley Scott's sci-fi horror, with Sigourney Weaver.

1.40 **Hollyoaks.** (R) **3.45** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **4.00** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.55** Four Rooms. (R) **5.50** The King of Queens. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 **Milkshake!** **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **9.30** The Saturday Show Live. **11.40** Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops. (R) **12.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **4.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

Agree Stewart and Elton are met with lies and aggression when they track down nearly £3,000 owned by a garage mechanic, while Steve and Ben encounter a retired couple who are being forced to leave their home. Stuart and Vic revisit a young debtor who owe £750 for a laptop computer, and in Oxfordshire, Paul and Steve chase £30,000 owed by a world-famous Formula One racing team. (R)

7.00 **NCIS.** The first installment of a two-part crossover with NCIS: New Orleans, in which the DC team co-operates with their Louisiana counterparts.

8.00 **NCIS: New Orleans.** The final part of a crossover with the original NCIS series. Ellie Bishop flies to New Orleans to help track down the person responsible for the aircraft murders.

8.55 **5 News Weekend.**

9.00 **The Championship: Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the top matches from the final day of the Championship season, including Middlesbrough v Brighton & Hove Albion.

10.00 **Goal Rush: Football League Tonight.** A round-up of all the goals from the final day of the season in League Two. Plus, a look at all the talking points.

10.30 **NCIS: Greatest Ever Episodes.** McGee kills an undercover police officer while on duty, and Jenny's approval of an investigation into the death places a strain on her relationship with Gibbs. (R)

11.20 **NCIS: Greatest Ever Episodes.** Tony and Ziva disappear while looking for smuggled weapons at a shipyard, leaving the rest of the team struggling to find them before they come to harm. (R)

12.15 **Super Casino.** **3.10** Now That's Funny! (R) **4.00** The Tube: Going Underground. (R) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R) **5.20** HouseBusters. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 **What Do Artists Do All Day?** **7.30** BBC Young Musician 2016 **9.00** **11.30** Dancing Cheek to Cheek: An Intimate History of Dance **11.30** Glen Campbell: The Rhinestone Cowboy **1.30** Glen Campbell: The Rhinestone Cowboy **3.30** Close

ITV2

11.00 **The Almost Impossible Gameshow** **12.00** **Scorpion** **12.50** **Film: Horrid Henry: The Movie** (2011) **1.50** FYI Daily **1.55** **Film: Horrid Henry: The Movie** (2011) **2.45** Britain's Got Talent **4.05** Britain's Got More Talent **5.00** **6.15** **Film: You've Got Mail** (1998) **6.30** FYI Daily **6.35** **Film: The Scorpion King** (2002) **8.30** FYI Daily **8.35** **Film: The Scorpion King** (2002) **9.15** Britain's Got More Talent **10.15** **Film: Celebrity Juice** **11.05** **Film: Family Guy** **12.35** **Film: American Dad!** **1.30** **The Cleveland Show** **2.20** **@elevenish**

ITV3

1.55 **Film: Agatha Christie's Marple 3.55** Foyle's War **6.00** Midsummers Murders **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Lewis **12.00** **Film & Retribution** **1.00** Northern Lights

ITV4

12.50 **Film: No Name on the Bullet** (1951) **1.55** **Film: The Dam Busters** (1955) **2.25** British Superbike Championships Highlights **3.25** **The Big Fish** **4.30** **Film: The Dam Busters** (1954) **5.35** **Film: Fluffy** (1969) **7.00** **Film: On Her Majesty's Secret Service** (1969) **8.10** **Film: Double Jeopardy** (1999) **9.10** **FYI Daily** **11.05** **Film: The Big Lebowski** (1998) **1.10** **Film: The Big Lebowski** (1998) **1.15** **Film: The Big Lebowski** (1998) **2.20** **Pawn Stars**

E4

11.30 **How I Met Your Mother** **12.30** **The Goldbergs** **1.30** **Brooklyn Nine-Nine** **2.30** **The Big Bang Theory** **4.30** **Film: Mr Popper's Penguins** (2011) **6.30** **The Big Bang Theory** **9.00** **Film: The Adjustment Bureau** (2011) **11.05** **Gogglebox** **1.00** **Film 4** **2.00** **Gogglebox** **3.50** **A to Z** **4.10** **Revenge**

Film 4

11.00 **Horton Hears a Who!** (2008) **1.00** **Aliens in the Attic** (2009) **2.40** **Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs** (2009) **4.25** **School of Rock** (2003) **6.35** **Star Trek** (2009) **9.00** **Red Eye** (2005) **10.40** **The Warriors** (1979) **12.30** **The Bunker** (2015) **2.15** **Apartment 143** (2011)

19 - 28
MAY



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CHOICE



David Attenborough

Attenborough at 90 (BBC1, 7pm)

Kirsty Young talks to David Attenborough about his life and career, discussing his travels around the world and most memorable encounters with wildlife. The programme features footage from his many natural history programmes, including scenes where unusual animal behaviour was caught on camera for the first time, and celebrates his influence on generations of viewers' understanding of the natural world. Featuring contributions from friends and colleagues including Michael Palin and Chris Packham.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 7.30 Match of the Day. (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 The Big Questions. 11.00 Regional Programme. 12.15 MasterChef: The Finals. (R) 1.15 BBC Weather: Weather. 1.30 Weather. (R) 2.00 Escape to the Country. (R) 2.45 Invictus: The Road to the Games. (R) 3.45 Points of View. 4.00 Songs of Praise. 4.35 Attenborough & the Giant Dinosaur. (R) 5.35 BBC News. 5.50 Regional Programme.

6.00 **Countryfile**. Matt Baker visits the Dartington Estate in South Devon, where ice cream is made from goat's milk and vertical farming projects are carried out. Anita Rani investigates sheepskin and handmade soap. Adam Henson meets livestock bred for conservation, and Tom Heap reports on a controversial tradition in Malta. Plus, coverage of the Food and Farming Awards and the announcement of this year's Countryfile Farming Hero. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

7.00 **Attenborough at 90**. Kirsty Young talks to David Attenborough about his life and career. Featuring footage from his many natural history programmes and contributions from colleagues and friends.

8.00 **House of Fraser British Academy Television Awards 2016**. Graham Norton hosts the prestigious TV awards show from London's Royal Festival Hall. Programmes nominated this year include Wolf Hall, Humans, Adele at the BBC, Doctor Foster, I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! and First Dates, while stars up for awards include Idris Elba, Hugh Bonneville, Miranda Hart, Peter Kay, Stephen Fry and Graham himself.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Manchester City v Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur v Southampton.

11.45 Film: **Smart People**. (2008) A misanthropic professor's self-absorption threatens his faltering relationship with a former student. Comedy drama, starring Dennis Quaid and Ellen Page.

1.15 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.20 BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The Great Chelsea Garden Challenge. (R) 7.15 This Farming Life. (R) 8.15 Gardeners' World. (R) 9.15 Beechgrove Garden. (R) 9.45 The Countess. (R) 10.15 Saturday Kitchen. Best Bites. (R) 11.00 The Rivers' Asian Adventure. (R) 12.15 MOTD2 Extra. 1.00 Rowing: Live from the European Championships. 2.00 Equestrian: Badminton Horse Trials. 4.00 Live Challenge Cup Rugby League.

6.30 **Flog It!** Paul Martin, Catherine Southon and Mark Stacey head to National Museum Cardiff, where valuable finds include a set of Swansea porcelain plates and a child's tea set. (R)

7.00 **Britain's Ultimate Pilots: Inside the RAF**. Documentary following the Red Arrows, the RAF's aerobatics display team, through a demanding summer display season. The pilots reveal the tricks of the trade as they prepare to carry out an ambitious performance over Buckingham Palace and fly a salute to the Queen. (R)

8.00 **Burma's Secret Jungle War with Joe Simpson**. The first of two programmes in which the mountaineer travels to Burma to tell the story of a guerrilla campaign fought behind Japanese lines in the Second World War, which his own father was a part of. Guided by his father's old maps and diaries, he goes in search of the army where the special forces soldiered on in the country. However, his journey is thrown into upheaval by current political events in Myanmar.

9.00 **Hillsborough**. Documentary exploring Britain's worst stadium disaster, in which 96 people were killed and hundreds more injured. The tragic events of April 15, 1989, are recounted in depth, with personal testimony from survivors, family members and police officers, many of whom are speaking publicly for the first time. The programme also explores the aftermath of the tragedy, looking at the 27-year campaign for justice.

11.00 Film: **Robot & Frank**. (2012) An elderly thief is bought a robot carer by his son, and teaches the machine to help him carry out one last heist. Sci-fi comedy drama, starring Frank Langella.

12.25 Sign Zone: **Countryfile**. (R) 1.20 Holby City. (R) 2.15 This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 **ITV**: Bottom Knocker Street. 6.15 Bottom Knocker Street. (R) 6.25 Pat & Stan. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Treks' Adventures. (R) 6.45 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 7.00 Signed Stories: Star & Story. (R) 7.15 The King of Surprise. (R) 7.30 Nerds & Monsters. (R) 7.45 The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) 8.00 Teen Titans Go! (R) 8.25 ITV News. 8.30 Weekend. 9.25 Griff's Great Britain. (R) 10.00 Peston on Sunday. 11.00 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 12.05 ITV News; Weather. 12.15 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 1.15 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 2.15 Fierce. (R) 3.20 Britain's Got Talent. (R) 4.30 Midsomer Murders. (R) 6.30 **Regional Programme**; Weather. 6.45 **ITV** News; Weather.

6.55 **The Chase Celebrity Special**. Bradley Walsh is joined as Westlife's Nicky Byrne, Olympian Alia Williams, Natalie Cassidy (EastEnders' Sonja Jackson) and Dave Myers of The Hairy Bikers pit their wits against ruthless quiz genius The Chaser in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds. They must work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught.

8.00 **The Durrells**. The family prepares for a celebration, and Margo is determined to persuade the Countess to attend. Gerry considers releasing his animals into the wild. Last in the series.

9.00 **Home Fires**. The village prepares for Nick and Teresa's wedding as the Battle of Britain draws to an end, while Pat has a decision to make as Marek prepares to leave. Last in the series.

10.05 **ITV** News; Weather.

10.20 **Her Majesty's Prison: Norwich**. Documentary detailing the harsh realities of prison life at HMP Norwich, which houses more than 750 adult inmates and young offenders. (R)

11.20 **Premiership Rugby Union**. Action from the 22nd and final round of regular-season fixtures, including Bath v Leicester Tigers, Newcastle Falcons v Sale Sharks, and Wasps v London Irish.

12.15 **Jackpot247**. 3.00 Motorsport UK. 3.55 British Superbike Championship Highlights. 4.45 **ITV** Newsround. 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 **The King of Queens**. (R) 6.40 **The King of Queens**. (R) 7.05 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.55 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.25 **IPC** Swimmers. Ed Sheerhan. (R) 9.00 **ITV** News. 9.30 Sunday Brunch. 12.30 **The Simpsons**. (R) 1.35 **The Simpsons**. (R) 2.05 Film: **Lilo & Stitch**. (2002) Disney animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Daveigh Chase. 3.50 Film: **The Rescuers**. (1977) Disney animated adventure, with Eva Gabor. 5.25 **The Tiny Tots Talent Agency**.

6.30 **Channel 4 News**.

7.00 **The World's Most Famous Train**. During its nine-month-long season, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express makes over 60 journeys, covering 150,000 kilometres, with the majority of trips between London and Venice. The train is comprised of 17 unique 1920s carriages that have transported a host of elite individuals across Italy, Switzerland, and Turkey for more than a century. This documentary follows the stories of the staff and passengers as the train makes its way across Europe, with some customers having paid more than £2,000 for the privilege. (R)

8.00 **Paul Merton's Secret Stations**. The comedian's tour of Britain's secret steam railway stations takes him to Pontefract in a West Yorkshire town famous for weddings, where he helps a bride to choose a dress and sings with the local male voice choir. He also gets off the train at Beasdale in the Scottish Highlands, near a famous training site for spies during the Second World War, and discovers why there is a request stop in the middle of Bristol.

9.00 **Indian Summers**. Charlie discovers his wife's affair, and makes plans to have Aafrah hanged for treason. The new viceroy is announced, and Ralph realises he has been the victim of a conspiracy.

10.00 **Gogglebox**. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

11.05 **8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown**. Jimmy Carr hosts. (R)

12.10 Film: **Extract**. (2010) 1.50 Come Dine with Me. (R) 4.05 Location, Location, Location. (R) 5.00 Four Rooms. (R) 5.55 Will & Grace. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 **Milkshake!**: Peppa Pig. 6.05 Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) 6.15 **Angeline Ballerina**. (R) 6.30 **Bob the Builder**. (R) 6.45 **Tickey Toc**. (R) 6.55 **Zack and Quack**. (R) 7.00 **Pat & Stan**. (R) 7.30 **Toy Story**. (R) 7.45 **Pete's Dragon**. (R) 7.40 **Little Princess**. (R) 7.50 **Pip Ahoy!** (R) 8.05 **Blaze and the Monster Machines**. (R) 8.30 **Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom**. (R) 8.45 **Wanda and the Alien**. (R) 8.55 **Toby's Travelling Circus**. (R) 9.10 **Jelly Jamm**. (R) 9.30 **LazyTown**. (R) 9.55 **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**. (R) 10.30 **The Championship**: Football League Tonight. (R) 11.30 **Goal Rush**: Football League Tonight. (R) 12.00 **The Gadget Show**. (R) 1.00 **The Secret Life of Puppies**. (R) 2.00 Film: **Ace Ventura: Pet Detective**. (1994) Comedy, starring Jim Carrey. 3.35 Film: **The Fifth Element**. (1997) Sci-Fi adventure, starring Bruce Willis. 5.55 News Weekend.

6.00 Film: **Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves**. (1991) An English nobleman returns home from the crusades to find his family has been murdered and the local people are oppressed by the tyrannical rule of the Sheriff of Nottingham. A band of outlaws, he recruits a group of bandits to fight for justice and protect the down trodden. Action adventure, starring Kevin Costner, Alan Rickman, Morgan Freeman and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio. Edited for language.

9.00 **Greatest Ever 90s Movies**. A countdown of some of the most memorable films from the last decade of the 20th century.

11.50 **Film: Goal Rush: League One – The Final Day**. A round-up of all the goals from the final day of the season in League One. Plus, a look at all the talking points and the latest league tables.

12.35 Film: **Reservoir Dogs**. (1992) A failed robbery ends in a bloodbath, and as the criminals try to work out whether someone betrayed them, Quentin Tarantino's thriller, with Harvey Keitel and Tim Roth. 2.20 **SuperCasino**. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming. 4.00 **Great Scientists**. (R) 4.50 **Great Artists**. A profile of English painter, JW Turner, who divided critics with his tendency toward abstraction, but is now hailed as a genius. (R) 5.20 **Divine Design**. Paul Binski chronicles the history of Britain's religious art, examining the baroque churches of Great Withey and Little Stanmore, which were built by wealthy industrialists. (R) 5.45 **Angels of Jarm**. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 **A History of Ancient Britain**. 8.00 **Forest, Field & Sky: Art Out of Nature**. 9.00 **The Silk Road**. 10.00 **The Sky at Night**. 10.30 Film: **Ran** (1985) 1.05 **Oak Tree: Nature's Greatest Survivor**. 2.35 **The Silk Road**. 3.35 Close.

ITV2

11.30 **Take Me Out**. 12.20 **Catchphrase**. 1.00 Film: **You've Got Mail** (1998) 2.00 **FYI Daily**. 2.10 Film: **You've Got Mail** (1998) 3.25 Film: **Nanny McPhee** (2005) 4.30 **FYI Daily**. 4.35 Film: **Nanny McPhee** (2005) 5.05 **Britain's Got Talent**. 6.50 **Film: The Mummys Tomb** (1998) 7.50 **Film: The Mummys Tomb** (1998) 8.00 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs**. 8.30 **Royal Stories**. 9.00 **An Audience with Barry Manilow**. 10.00 **The Blonde Bombshell**. 12.20 **Inspector Morse**. 2.20 **Blue Murder**. 3.10 **May the Best House Win**. 4.50 **On the Buses**. 5.15 **Judge Judy**.

ITV3

12.35 **Foyle's War**. 2.40 Film: **Columbo**: **Etude in Black** (1972) 4.15 Film: **City of Angels** (1998) 5.15 **FYI Daily**. 5.20 **Film: City of Angels** (1998) 6.00 **Wilson on the Road**. 7.00 **Doc Martin**. 8.00 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs**. 8.30 **Royal Stories**. 9.00 **An Audience with Barry Manilow**. 10.00 **The Blonde Bombshell**. 12.20 **Inspector Morse**. 2.20 **Blue Murder**. 3.10 **May the Best House Win**. 4.50 **On the Buses**. 5.15 **Judge Judy**.

ITV4

11.00 **Live British Touring Car Championship**. Coverage of round three from Thruxton. 1.20 **British Touring Cars** – **Crashes and Smashes**. 6.30 **Pawn Stars**. 7.00 **The Wine Show**. 9.00 **Premiership Rugby Union**. 9.00 **Film: Escape from New York** (1981) 10.00 **FYI Daily**. 10.05 **Film: Escape from New York** (1981) 11.05 **Film**: **On Deadly Ground** (1994) 12.05 **FYI Daily**. 12.10 **Film**: **On Deadly Ground** (1994) 1.05 **Fifth Gear**. 2.05 **Hogan's Heroes**. 2.40 **Films Now**

E4

12.30 **Made in Chelsea**. 1.35 **Joe & Casper Hit the Road**. 2.35 **The Big Bang Theory**. 3.50 Film: **We Bought a Zoo** (2011) 8.00 **The Big Bang Theory**. 9.00 **Marvel's Agents of SHIELD**. 10.00 **Tattoo Fixers**. 11.00 **The Inbetweeners**. 12.05 **Film: The Inbetweeners**. 1.05 **Marvel's Agents of SHIELD**. 2.00 **How I Met Your Mother**. 2.50 **Gogglebox**. 3.30 **Hollyoaks**.

Film4

11.00 **Millions** (2004) 1.00 **Biggles** (1986) 2.50 **Krull** (1983) 5.10 **Journey to the Center of the Earth** (2008) 7.00 **Unstoppable** (2010) 9.00 **Speed** (1994) 11.15 **Crash** (2004) 1.30 **Kramer** (1979) 3.45 **Close**.

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MONDAY

The World Is Not Enough, ITV, 11.10pm

James Bond is assigned to protect the heiress of an oil dynasty after her father is killed in a bombing at MI6 headquarters. The attack is the work of an infamous terrorist who is unable to feel pain after surviving a gunshot to his head, and who now intends to destroy the world's supply of oil. Spy adventure, starring Pierce Brosnan. (1999)

TUESDAY

A Date to Die For, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A recent divorcee, suffering from bipolar disorder, accepts a date with a single father. The next morning, she awakens to find her date's dead body in her bed, a knife plunged in his chest. Trying to piece together her memories of the previous night, she sets out to defend her reputation and the lives of her family by locating the killer herself. Thriller, starring Victoria Pratt. (2015)



Alex Cross, Friday, Channel 5, 10pm

WEDNESDAY

Left for Dead, Channel 5, 3.20pm

After being left for dead, a detective develops amnesia and remembers nothing about her life or family. As she struggles to recall her past, she discovers that the road to recovery may threaten the safety of her husband and daughter. Thriller, starring Elisabeth Rohm, Tygh Runyan and Neil Napier. (2014)

THURSDAY

Patient Killer, Channel 5, 3.20pm

A hypnotherapist specialising in dreams blames herself for failing to prevent a patient's suicide two years ago. After setting up a new practice, she wonders if history is repeating itself when a new client with a similar condition asks for her help.

Psychological thriller, starring Victoria Pratt. (2015)

FRIDAY

Alex Cross, Channel 5, 10pm

A homicide cop pursues an ex-military assassin who has sadistically tortured and murdered a wealthy executive, leaving a surreal clue to the next victim. However, as the detective tries to bring the killing spree to an end, he finds his own family is also in the firing line. Crime thriller, starring Tyler Perry. (2012)

David hopes to play his new role just wright

As well as the Queen and David Attenborough's 90th birthdays, it probably hasn't escaped your notice that the BBC has recently been marking another significant date – the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare.

There have already been several programmes to mark the event across the Beeb, including last month's *Shakespeare Live!* From the RSC and the star-studded *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses*, which began on Saturday.

We've still got Russell T Davies' take on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to come (featuring Matt Lucas as Bottom, Maxine Peake as Titania and Bernadette Cribbins as Snout), but for many people the most intriguing part of the season is the new sitcom *Upstart Crow*.

That's because it's been scripted by Ben Elton, a man with an impressive track record when it comes to historical comedy. He co-wrote three series of *Blackadder*, meaning he's already familiar with the Elizabethan era (and the Bard made a cameo appearance in the special *Blackadder*:

Back & Forth, where he was played by Colin Firth).

So, in theory Elton shouldn't have needed to do much additional research for *Upstart Crow*, which is set in 1592 as the playwright begins to make a name for himself in London, while trying to balance his responsibilities to his family back in Stratford-upon-Avon. However, Elton did throw himself into the period spirit, saying: "I have tried very hard to think myself into Shakespeare's creative world, writing only with a small chicken feather and not changing my underpants for a year."

Fortunately, that didn't deter an impressive cast from signing up for *Upstart Crow*, including *Peep Show's* David Mitchell, who is playing Shakespeare. But then, as he points out, it's such a rare opportunity, it must have been difficult to pass up.

Mitchell says: "I'm delighted to be playing England's greatest bard at this difficult time for bards everywhere. You just try getting work as a bard these days. It's virtually impossible."

He's joined by Harry Enfield (who

can also currently be seen as Prince Charles in Channel 4's *The Windsors*) and sitcom veteran Paula Wilcox as Shakespeare's parents, John and Mary. Liza Tarbuck plays his wife Anne and *Raised By Wolves'* Helen Monk is his daughter Susannah.

Mark Heap is also on board as the Bard's nemesis Robert Greene – aka the man who once described Shakespeare as an 'upstart crow' and gave the sitcom its title.

That points to another theme in the series – one that should make it easier for audiences to accept the most influential and iconic writer in the history of the English language as something of an upstart dog. As producer Mark Edwards told *The Independent*: "Shakespeare is a middle-class nerd with a lot of talent trying to make his mark on a system geared to favour the titled and those with an Oxford education."

In the opening episode, his struggles also include trying to find inspiration for one of his most famous characters while dealing with an angry actor, an annoying guest, and his family's script suggestions.



David Mitchell stars in Upstart Crow, Monday, BBC2, 10pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Invictus Games 2016

BBC1, 7.30pm

New series. Gabby Logan and Ade Adepitan present coverage from Orlando, Florida, of the second staging of the international multi-sport event for wounded, injured or sick armed forces personnel and veterans, which had its inaugural event two years ago in London. Featuring highlights of the opening ceremony, which featured appearances by patron Prince Harry and First Lady Michelle Obama, as well as performances by James Blunt, Laura Wright and Gareth Malone's *Invictus Choir*.

TUESDAY

Penguin A&E with Lorraine Kelly

Channel 5, 9pm

It may come as a surprise to anyone whose knowledge of penguin behaviour derives from the movie *Happy Feet*, but not all of the birds live in a winter wonderland. One species has made its home near one of South Africa's busiest cities, Cape Town, which is every bit as dangerous as any frozen wasteland, especially when the flightless birds waddle into traffic. Now, Lorraine Kelly is heading to South Africa to meet the team who are working to save the endangered species in the continent's busiest penguin emergency department.

The hospital rescues more than 1,500 vulnerable penguins each year – which in this opening episode includes Bandit, who has been brought in with a fish hook in his stomach, and Nipper, who has been bitten by a rogue dog.

WEDNESDAY

Killer Women with Piers Morgan

ITV, 9pm

Piers Morgan is taking a break from the *Good Morning Britain* sofa and heading back to America for this hard-hitting two part documentary, which sees him meeting some of the US's most notorious female murderers and discovering what drove them to kill. He begins his journey in Gatesville, Texas, where he speaks to Erin Caffey, who at the age of just 16 conspired with her boyfriend to kill her parents and two younger brothers, and is now due to stay behind bars until she is nearly 60. Despite being shot five times, her father, Terry, survived the tragedy that claimed the rest of his family and has made the incredible choice to forgive his daughter, visiting her in prison every month. But while Terry and Erin insist that

her boyfriend Charlie was the driving force behind the murders, Piers discovers that not everyone agrees with that version of events.

THURSDAY

Peaky Blinders

BBC2, 9pm

On the orders of the secretive Economic League, Tommy goes to London to meet the wildly eccentric and volatile Duke Leon – and when he is given his mission, he soon realises the extreme lengths his new paymasters are willing to go to in their quest for power. Back in Birmingham, John's temper gets the better of him, and a personal dispute with the Italians threatens to explode into a devastating war. Tommy struggles to regain control of the situation – only to

discover how extensive his new enemy's hold on the Peaky Blinders is. Cillian Murphy, Helen McCrory and Joe Cole star, with an appearance by Paddy Considine (*The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*).

FRIDAY

Revealed – The Truth About the Holy Grail

Channel 5, 8pm

The legend of the Holy Grail has taken many forms throughout history, but it has always identified the Grail as the cup Jesus drank from during the Last Supper. However, the whereabouts of the cup has been a subject of intense speculation for centuries. Back in 2011, León University medieval history lecturer Margarita Torres and art historian José Manuel Ortega del Río discovered two remarkable Arab parchments at Cairo's University of al-Azhar that appeared to offer important new clues. However, in Europe alone there are 200 supposed holy grails, so is the precious goblet in León's San Isidro basilica the real one?

MUM

BBC2, 10pm

New series. A woman forced to deal with the death of her husband determines to find out who she is and possibly seek new romance. Family comedy, starring Lesley Manville.

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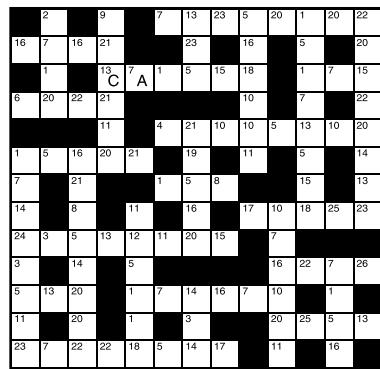
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

F	X	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
B	Y	W	U	E	A	Q	T	V	N	Z	H	M
C	2	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

Quiz

- Which actress was the BBC's Girl Friday in a 1994 TV series?
- In which US state is the Grand Canyon?
- From which word are 'tsar' and 'Kaiser' derived?
- Which herb is also called milfoil?
- Which unit is defined as one nautical mile per hour?
- Which Russian writer declined the 1958 Nobel prize for literature?
- In which country are the Southern Alps, highest point Mount Cook?
- Who was World Snooker Champion six times in the 1970s?
- What is the world's southernmost active volcano?
- From which fruit is the drink Tokay made?

Last week's solutions:
Quiz: 1 Tasmania; 2 Antelope; 3 St. Andrews; 4 Length; 5 Steven Spielberg; 6 Thomas Beecham; 7 Jurassic; 8 National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers; 9 Fifth column; 10 Myalgic encephalomyelitis.
Niner: NEIGHBOUR

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

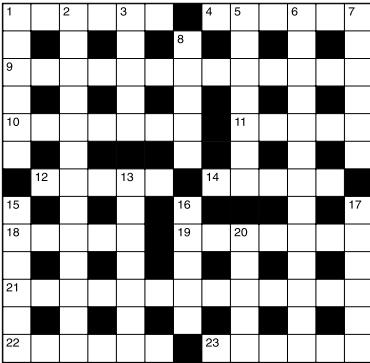
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Still, it might result in interference (6)
- Lost, as a dog may be (6)
- Single-minded concentration before starting the job (13)
- Speed too much, and go over the limit (7)
- She's back in the scene, right on cue (5)
- Rings the wrong shop about nothing (5)
- We're clean out of them! (5)
- Act for each class (7)
- Most air-lines provide this flight (5)
- Performer makes a start that is different (7)
- Takes the plunge without consulting the directors? (4,9)
- About eleven, the ship moves off (6)
- He shares what's left (2-4)

Down

- It may be used to weaken the spirit (6)
- A fair exchange in view? (2,3,3,2,3)
- Suffer part of the main current (5)
- One stays with it (7)
- To take up the post is to increase the risk (5,3,5)
- Northern statesman? (6)
- The poet is very ardent! (5)
- Remonstrance (13)
- Habits of a wise man in America (6)
- Possibly means to provide titles (5)
- One who minds is easily hurt (6)
- Let the sailor in as well, though it's forbidden (5)
- Motive (6)



Quick Clues:

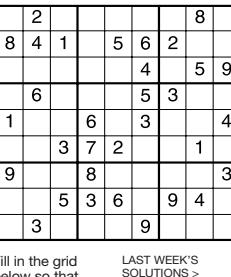
Across

- Tremble (6)
- Expurgate (6)
- Remonstrance (13)
- Wandered (7)
- Courtyard (5)
- Construct (5)
- Hold off (5)
- Automaton (5)
- Repartee (7)
- Confusion (13)
- Threefold (6)
- Motive (6)

Down

- Feeling sick (6)
- Always calm (13)
- Attempt (5)
- Specimen (7)
- Inefficiency (13)
- Haphazard (6)
- Conduct (5)
- To the letter (7)
- Minister (6)
- Wide (5)
- Defeated (6)
- Dough (5)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >
5 3 7 1 2 1 6 4 8 9
9 4 6 7 3 8 2 1 5
2 8 1 5 9 4 7 6 3
1 2 9 4 5 7 3 5 8
7 5 4 6 8 9 5 2 6
6 5 1 4 3 2 7 9 2 7
9 1 3 6 2 4 9 5 7 2
7 6 5 1 2 3 8 9 4
4 9 2 8 7 5 6 3 1

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Astonishment; 7 Sidle; 8 Theta; 9 Ice; 10 Faithless; 11 Erects; 12 Polish; 15 Touch-wood; 17 Ass; 18 Redan; 19 Drone; 21 Free-thinkers. Down: 1 Architecture; 2 Nod; 3 Scenic; 4 Matchwood; 5 Niece; 6 Cat's whiskers; 7 Swede; 10 Prowl; 13 Jiggle; 14 Hooligan; 16 Uproar; 19 Quill; 20 Jockey; 21 Pattern; 22 Green; 7 Appal; 9 Litter; 9 Nip; 10 Antropose; 11 Locate; 12 Cobweb; 15 Trappings; 17 Tor; 18 Exact; 19 Slot; 21 Playing field. Down: 1 Plain clothes; 2 Imp; 3 Galore; 4 Religious; 5 Eaten; 6 Reverberated; 7 Aspic; 10 Antipathy; 13 Watch; 14 Unison; 16 Avail; 20 Oaf.

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Members of staff outside Stourbridge's Pizza Express following the refurbishment



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Aiming to please, Lydia Orrell, manager Louise Kitson and Andy Steventon



The much-vaunted delicious dough balls



Pasta to please – the lasagna classica

Express delight at bits and pizzas of Italian in new-look restaurant

PIZZA, not something I would normally consider present on my radar, so a food review of Pizza Express? Well, as they say, when in Rome...

For many years now Pizza Express has been offering top-notch Italian delicacies from its High Street restaurant in Stourbridge, and has recently undergone a fabulous transformation.

Walking in, you are immediately aware of clean lines – sleek, but with a hint of the traditional – harking back to the building's previous incarnation as Cranage's Tea Rooms, and Royal Turf Lounge Bar. The frontage, once strewn with cakes and other baking delights to tempt passers-by, is now a window onto diners enjoying their meals, with excellent, attentive service, in relaxed, stylish surroundings.

As I say, I'm no expert, but having settled down with a nice spicy Shiraz, I plumped for the calamari as starter, while my wife, a die-hard pizza/pasta aficionado with Pizza Ex-

presses in and around Preston – it's a long story – was straight in there, almost salivating at the mere thought of dough balls.

Simply, but exquisitely presented, I picked up my first piece of calamari – well, fingers were invented before forks – with some trepidation, as I had been reliably informed by my Italian food expert opposite that it can be chewy. Not a bit of it, it melted in the mouth and the dip set my palate aglow with tartness. Judging by the silence, albeit brief, and Cheshire cat grin of my eating partner, the dough balls were also up to standard.

In between courses, I was taken aback, once again by the decor. Marble tables with a selection of different seating – none of which looked like the types developed by sadists who only work in 90 degree angles, making you feel like you're about to fall down a ski slope. Instead comfort is assured. There is a black and white theme throughout, with dark

wood in between and modern lighting bringing things smack-bang up to date, without going over the top – at no point did I think American diner.

And at no point did I think Italian pretension either – there were no strains of accordion in the background, or Volare being blasted out on the music system, instead it was unobtrusive up-beat pop, played at a volume which didn't interfere with conversation.

Cannily, the diner is given a first-hand view of the goings-on in the kitchen, as it's open plan and you see your dishes being created before your very eyes.

Anyway, back to the food, my main was a thin crust diavolo pizza, as I am not a fan of doughy chewing-for-infinity Italian fayre. On arrival, it was actually bigger than the plate, but had a very generous smattering of spicy beef, peppers and pepperoni to keep me occupied, with the base at the very most plate thickness, brilliant for me, with my aversion to dough chomping.

Meanwhile Mrs Preston had the lasagna classica, which it has to be said, looked fantastic. Huh? We go to a pizza restaurant and she doesn't have pizza? No, I didn't get that one either. Between us there was a side salad which had a lovely sharp dressing and proper, crunchy homemade coleslaw.

I have to admit to being beaten by the sheer size of my main course, but I had an eye on the dessert menu, which offered far more than the usual chocolate fudge cake and ice cream – see I'm used to class joints like! I was particularly intrigued by the dolcetti offerings, smaller sweets on a oblong plate alongside a coffee of your choice – what a fantastic idea! So it was salted caramel profiteroles for me.

The missus meanwhile opted for limoncello, a very sweet and sour sorbet affair, with meringue-type bits inside and lemony sauce within – mouth-watering. Both were the perfect end to a perfect meal, which was just part of the Pizza Express experience and one which we hope to repeat very soon.

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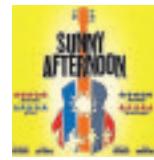
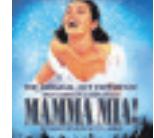
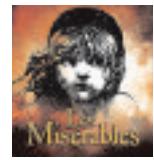
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Contact 0121 4204646 or email derekspires@btconnect.com



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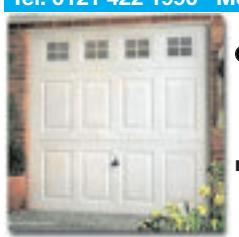
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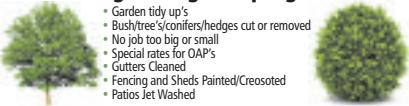
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Something to smile about

By Sharon Walters

It's hard to believe that it's close on 20 years since Toyota launched the Prius – the petrol-electric car that was at the forefront of hybrid technology actually on the road when it first appeared in 1997.

Prius was a bit like Marmite – you either loved it or hated it. Not just on the hybrid issue but also on its looks.

Now we are on the fourth generation and it really isn't like the spread any more.

Technology has advanced with a vengeance, its looks inside and out which used to be questioned are now very stylish and it is very well equipped. Plus it is a good drive and saves you a packet of money.

There's an improved and more efficient fully hybrid powertrain with several new safety, comfort and convenience features.

Engine, gearbox, battery and electric motor have all been revised on the car which now sits on a new platform that will underpin a range of new models. The move to this platform has reduced the height of the top of the bonnet and allows more light into the cabin. Plus it gives the driver better visibility, improved handling response and agility.

Prius pulls away silently in electric mode and now goes a little further on battery power than it used to. When the engine kicks in, it's hardly noticeable. Operation is easy, you just press the power button at the right of the steering wheel and the car comes silently to life. All you have to prompt you is the 'ready' prompt on the instrument display. There are three drive modes – Eco, Normal and Power.

Toyota has introduced a new grade line-up for Prius, with new Business Edition and Business Edition Plus versions at the top with Active and Excel versions at the entry level.

All models get LED headlights with automatic high beam, electric driver's seat adjustment, smart entry with push-button start and the Toyota Touch 2 multimedia system with touchscreen control and DAB radio reception. An enhanced Toyota Safety Sense package is also standard, as detailed below. A radar-controlled adaptive cruise control system is included, which automatically keeps the car a safe distance from the vehicle ahead, and the pre-collision warning system is able to detect pedestrians in the car's path, as well as other vehicles. These are in addition to the pre-collision brake assist, autonomous emergency braking, lane departure alert, road sign assist and automatic high beam.

A new dual-zone air conditioning system is also standard, equipped with a function that detects whether the front passenger seat is occupied and automatically adjusts air vent opening and air flow accordingly, for more efficient and energy-saving operation.

Higher grade models gain more advanced features, such as a colour head-up display (a Toyota first), wireless phone charger, blind spot monitor with rear cross traffic alert, heated front seats and an auto-dimming rear view mirror.

This latest version marks the first European appearance of SIPA, Toyota's new Simple Intelligent Park Assist system. As well as providing automatic steering into a parallel or series parking space, the system can also help the driver exit a tight space. An automatic braking system provides a safeguard against colliding with parked vehicles or obstacles. You can also get a whole raft of op-



There's an improved and more efficient fully hybrid powertrain with several new safety, comfort and convenience features

tional extras. Quality in the cabin is good with a centrally mounted instrument panel that has sharp graphics, making it easy to read. The main infotainment screen is a fair size and controls are generally instinctive.

That new platform which has allowed the battery to be shifted further back under the rear seats also helps in freeing up more space in the rear and in the boot – you get 502 litres of space which is reasonable for a car of this size.

But above all for potential buyers, there's the question of economy.

With CO2 emissions at around 70g/km road tax is nil (a big incentive to buy by company car drivers) and fuel economy is impressive – Toyota claim 94.2mpg on a combined cycle although in my week of driving I was quite a way short of this at about 75mpg but that's still something to smile about.

Prices start at £23,295.

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PHEV socking it to 'em

By David Banner

The Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV is a plug-in hybrid that can't fail to impress. It'll get over 32 miles on a full electric charge, which means that many commutes will cost pennies in energy charges.

The brand quotes a 156mpg combined cycle fuel figure and the 42g/km emissions return also means free London congestion charge and a minuscule benefit in kind tax bill. Here, we look at the facelifted version.



We liked the Outlander diesel when we tried it but the PHEV uses very different mechanicals.

This plug-in hybrid features a 2.0-litre petrol engine and a pair of electric motors on each axle, giving all wheel drive and a combined power output in the region of 220bhp.

This revised version is more sprightly when you bury the throttle, getting to 25mph from rest a full two seconds quicker than the original version.

Although Mitsubishi still quote a sprint to 62mph time of 11 seconds, which sounds strangely slow.

It certainly doesn't feel it though. Driven in full electric mode, you'll feel the huge torque of the motors and be able to cruise at mo-



Refinement is very good, even without the sound of an engine to drown out wind and tyre noise

torway speeds on electric power alone, although not for too far.

Refinement is very good, even without the sound of an engine to drown out wind and tyre noise.

The 'official' fuel consumption figure of 148mpg merely serves to remind us that we have an urgent need for a new European fuel consumption test which more closely mirrors everyday driving conditions.

The PHEV can be fast charged to 80 per cent in 30 minutes and Mitsubishi reckons

that if you cover more than 100 miles between charges, the diesel is going to work out more cost-effective.

Charge the Outlander PHEV more frequently and the numbers swing in its favour.

Being first to market improves the chances of success – and so it's proved. Being first with a product so strong that it will have many rivals going back to the drawing board ought to guarantee success – and so it's also proved.

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Honda Motability offers

By James Parker

With an excellent range that includes best-sellers like the new Honda Jazz, new Civic hatchback and Tourer estate plus the CR-V SUV, Honda is able to offer Motability considerable choice and variety.

It's also worth noting that two cars in the range – the Civic and CR-V – are both currently built here in Britain!

Last year, What Car? Magazine's journalists voted Honda as the most reliable car brand for the ninth year in a row.

All this information combines to make Honda a 'go to' brand for many Motability customers, especially as this esteemed manufacturer is able to offer a number of enticing deals.

Let's take a look at those Honda Motabil-

ity offers currently available at your Honda dealer.

New Honda Jazz

We start with the talented Jazz where selected models in the excellent new Honda Jazz supermini range are now available with NIL Motability Advanced Payment, including the Jazz 1.3 i-VTEC S Automatic and even better equipped Jazz 1.3 i-VTEC SE Automatic.

All other Jazz models are also available under the scheme for low Advanced Payments.

Honda Civic

Need more room? All of the Civic five-door range is available to Motability customers, including petrol and diesel versions and the sleek Civic Tourer model.

Outstanding Motability offers across the Civic range include the NIL Advanced Payment on the Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S five-door, Civic 1.4 i-VTEC SE Plus five-door and the Civic 1.4 i-VTEC SE Plus five-door with Sat Nav. The Civic 1.8 i-VTEC S Automatic is also



It's also worth noting that two cars in the range – the Civic and CR-V – are both currently built here in Britain

available with a Low Advanced Payment of £99. All these Civics are petrol-powered.

Go diesel and there's the Civic 1.6 i-DTEC S five-door available for a Motability Advanced Payment of only £99. What's more, you'll be gaining one of the most advanced, refined and efficient diesels around.

Opt for the stylish Civic Tourer and there's nil advanced payment on the Civic Tourer 1.8 i-VTEC S Automatic while the Civic Tourer 2.0 i-VTEC S 2WD is currently being offered for the low advanced pay-

ment of £299. The Civic Tourer 1.6 i-DTEC S with that excellent diesel powerplant is also available for an Advanced Payment of £299.

Honda CR-V

And then there's the CR-V, Honda's exceptionally talented SUV for Motability customers to consider, especially as the CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S 2WD is currently being offered for an advanced payment of £299. The diesel-powered CR-V 1.6 i-DTEC S 2WD is also available for an advanced payment of £699.

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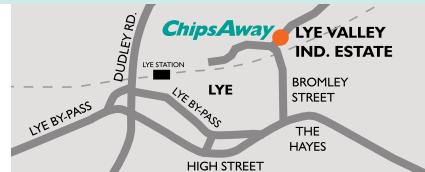
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Plenty of help – volunteers at Springhill



Painting the gates, Harry Baddams, Tommy Cox and Harry Davenport



Volunteers working hard at Codsall Cricket Club

The covers are off as clubs feel the Force

CRICKET clubs across the Black Country and Staffordshire have been sprucing up their grounds ahead of the new season.

Old Hill, Cannock, Himley, Springhill and Codsall were just a few of the clubs hard at work recently, in line with NatWest's Cricket Force initiative.

With the help of volunteers from the bank, members of the various clubs spent hours of their spare time painting fences, scrubbing sight screens and erecting boundary fencing.

Those from Old Hill Cricket Club, based in Cradley Heath, touched up the entrance gates, decorated the changing rooms and outside benches, and improved the pitch.

Funding

Volunteers at Springhill Cricket Club spent their weekend constructing new training nets for the forthcoming season, as well as working on the patio of the new pavilion, which cost an approximate total of £180,000.

Codsall CC received £300 of funding from the English Cricket Board, via the Jewson Privilege Scheme, which went towards buying tools and equipment to create an outdoor compound where equipment can now be kept.

The club was also recently awarded a grant by Midcounties Co-operative to buy new mobile nets, and it is hoped the improvements made to the ground will ensure there is secure space for them. The aim of the Cricket Force scheme

SPORTING FEATURE

By Joe Edwards

"It's hard going finding money to support community groups like ours, so we are very lucky that large organisations like these are giving back to the little guys."

is to bring clubs and their communities closer, and Vicki Green, Codsall CC chair, said: "Cricket force is a great weekend that brings all the club together."

"We dig and build, clean and scrub. It's a real team effort and we had a lots of fun."

Grateful

"Even young children got involved doing up noticeboards and clearing out the changing rooms."

"We are so grateful to all our volunteers and the support of the ECB, NatWest, Staffordshire Cricket Board, Jewson's Builders Merchants and Midcounties Cooperative who helped us make a massive difference to the ground and its facilities."

"It's hard going finding money to support community groups like ours, so we are very lucky that large organisations like these are giving back to the little guys."



Making tea for the workers Judy Cox with Tommy Cox in the changing rooms



Working on nets at Himley



Volunteers improving the playing surface at Cannock Cricket Club despite the poor weather.

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Grounds for improvement as cricket clubs feel the force

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Josh leads the way in medal haul

SENIOR swimmers from Halesowen Swimming Club travelled to Coventry's 50m pool for two days of competition at the West Midlands Swimming Championships.

The swimmers were on fine form with a haul of medals coming their way. Star of the show was Josh Bradley who triumphed to become the West Midlands Regional Champion in the 50m breaststroke and the 50m butterfly. He also gained silver in the 100m backstroke and bronze in the 100m butterfly.

Jack Simpson achieved gold in the 15 years age group, in both the 50m and 100m freestyle, while James Cuthbert grabbed gold in the 15 years age group 50m butterfly, silver in the 50m and 100m freestyle and bronze in the 100m butterfly.

Jakob Baker managed a full set of bronze medals in the 16 years age group in the 50m, 100m and 200m breaststroke, and Emma Bird achieved bronze in the 15 years 200m backstroke.

Lauren Hill just missed out on a medal after progressing to the finals, finishing fourth in the 50m butterfly and fifth in the 100m butterfly.

The two boys relays teams performed exceptionally with the 14-16 years team coming second in both the freestyle and medley relays. All swimmers achieved personal best times during these close fought races just losing out for top spot to Ellesmere Titans. The team consisted of Jack Simpson, James Cuthbert, Ryan Larkin and Jakob Baker.

The senior men's relay team achieved silver in the freestyle and bronze in the medley relays. The team consisted of Josh Bradley, Callum Tinsdale, Mark Laing and Zach Collins.

Overall, Halesowen performed very well and were certainly punching above their weight.

Cycling club gears up for two massive events on calendar

HALESOWEN Academy took their second win of the season with Jack Stanton-Warren crossing the line first at the criterium race in Tameside, Manchester.

The Ludlow racer attacked early on and was away for 18 laps taking an intermediate prize, and then attacked again close to the finish to take a solo victory.

This week is a massive one for Halesowen Cycling Club with two major events on the calendar. Tomorrow, the popular Friday night track league resumes at the Manor Abbey velodrome, with close to 100 riders registered to race in a programme that lasts until September 2, and includes racing for all levels from under-10 to elite. Last year's winner Charles Walker rides again, as does local elite Jacob Tipper.

Halesowen also promote their biggest event of the year on Sunday with their road race over 70 miles on the Astley circuit in Worcestershire, as the West Midlands Road Race League resumes. Stanton-Warren and Walker will carry the promoting club's hopes along with Olli Dighton, Nick Clayton, Tom Swinney and Jo Hobbs.

League campaign off to perfect start

HALESOWEN got their league campaign off to a perfect start with a comprehensive victory over Coventry and North Warwickshire.

Having dodged tricky weather which caused a number of neighbouring fixtures to be postponed, they put in a sterling all-around performance to earn their first win of 2016.

After falling at the first hurdle in the ECB National Knockout Cup the previous weekend, skipper Richard Brooker was delighted with a confidence-boosting triumph at Seth Somers Park.

Brooker said: "Despite some changes in person-

Cricket

nel from last season we played like we did in the back half of 2015 when we went unbeaten."

"We needed to start the campaign well and this is just what we were looking for."

A strong bowling effort saw Halesowen restrict the visitors to 174-8, with tight bowling from youngsters Alex Bullingham (2-26) and Masharaf Shazad (1-29) backed up by Brooker (2-29) and Hassan Quami (2-39).

Weather interruptions gave Halesowen a reduced target of 132, and with Ed Kilbee (74 no)

and Mark Fisher (34) putting on 98 for the first wicket they cruised to victory by nine wickets.

The 2nd XI saw their game abandoned due to rain after West Bromwich and Dartmouth had totted up 240-6 in 45 overs.

The 3rd XI were also endured a frustrating afternoon with their game against Astwood Bank washed out after they had reduced their opponents to 127-7.

However, the 4th XI picked up an excellent eight-wicket win as spinner Charlie Greening (5-15) ripped through Astwood Bank before Hayden Evans (31) helped them knock off the runs.

'Tank' driven towards third shot at title

DUDLEY'S Ryan Aston will hope to make it third time lucky with a Midlands title after being given a second shot back up at middleweight.

Aston's third opportunity at an area title will come on home turf in a make-or-break shot at glory at Dudley Town Hall on May 21.

The 25-year-old will headline Paul 'P' Rowson's 'Resurgence' show as the first challenger to defending Midlands middleweight champion Craig Cunningham in a 10-round contest.

Aston will attempt to seize the middleweight belt for a second time, first losing in two rounds to Curtis Valentine for the then-vacant strap in July 2012. 'Tank' also went for the Midlands crown at light middle last June, losing on a hotly-disputed points decision to holder Jason Welborn.

The slick southpaw scored victories over Kevin McCauley, Nathan Graham and Christian Hoskin-Gomez before challenging for the IBF International title on a BoxNation-television show in January, losing in six to Ahmet Patterson.

His opponent, left-handed Cunningham, aged 28, who lives in Oldbury, has lost just once in 15 pro contests.

The under-card will consist of a quartet of four-round affairs. Netherton's Les Byfield will tackle Joe Beeden, while Rowley Regis' Tyler Denny is the only home fighter yet to be matched.

Flamboyant flyweight Matt Windle takes on Gateshead's Gary Reeve, while rising star Brad Foster, from Lichfield, takes on Jordan Turner. Tickets, at £40, £20 stage and £70, are available from the promoter on 07976 283 157. The Town Hall can be contacted on 01384 815 577.

Elsewhere, Coseley's Jamie Gelder was outpointed by Kevin Mitchell's cousin Danny Mitchell on a pro bill at the Aria Suite in Leeds.

Basford looking for Heathens maximum

BEN Basford is backing Cradley to push for maximum points from two meetings in four days.

Heathens head to Coventry tomorrow (Friday) before taking on comeback club Isle of Wight at Monmore on Monday, May 9.

Basford, a big hit with fans since his winter switch from Kent, moves up from reserve into the top five on Friday.

He said: "We feel much more confident going to Coventry; it should be a great meeting but I think we can snatch it late on. On Monday we want to keep our run at home going and two wins would be huge for us."

Singles ladder nets milestone



Shaun Ryder and Paul Adams with Richard Waldron

WOLLASTON Tennis Club's singles ladder, which began six months ago, has chalked up its 100th match.

Wollaston, predominantly a club that plays doubles, started the new venture after last year's club championships, with the first matches played in October.

The ladder really took off through the winter period with challenges flying between the 22 members who signed up.

Ladder organiser Richard Waldron said: "It was clear after the 2015 club championships that the demand for competitive singles was high at Wollaston and we want to grow this in 2016."

Shaun Ryder and Paul Adams were the men on court for the ton-up clash.

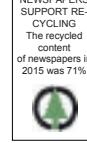
The ladder now moves into a qualifying period, with players looking to be in the top eight positions to earn their place in the finals event between May 22 and June 6, the period of the French Open. It is planned to hold the final on Wollaston's artificial clay courts on the day of the French final.

Wollaston invested £130,000 in 2014 for four new courts and improved floodlighting. The club is also looking to upgrade their other four courts.

Anyone interested in joining the ladder should contact Richard at rwaldron@oaktreeitm.co.uk

For more information about joining the club go to www.wollaston tennis.co.uk

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